

"How I Made My Best Crop This Year."

I.—A Fine Crop of Sweet Potatoes.

Attributed to a Thoroughly Prepared and Humus-Filled Soil.

Messrs. Editors: I made two ideal crops this season, sweet potatoes and strawberries. Will tell you about the potatoes.

The land was a white sandy loam with red clay subsoil, was planted in potatoes the year before and made a good crop. After digging I disked down the ridges and sowed rye. In the spring cut the first crop and fed to cows; when it made a good second growth I turned it under with a No. 64 Chattanooga steel-beam plow and let it remain for several weeks; then ran off furrows three and a half feet apart with one-horse plow, and filled these furrows with manure from the cow stable.

Cows had been fed on corn stover and peavines cut to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch lengths, with meal from corn, oats, rye, and wheat, ground together. The stalls were very liberally bedded with wheat and oat straw, and when the manure was taken out it was very wet and soggy. As soon as the manure was put in, it was covered by turning the furrow back on the manure. It remained in that shape until planting time.

When the slips were large enough to set and the land was in high order I threw two furrows on top of this with a one-horse plow and set the slips about 18 inches apart on top of this ridge. After the slips had taken hold I worked among them with a hoe to break any crust and kill the young weeds and grass. All the after-working was to run a Troxler cultivator through the middles some three or four times, always doing this when the land was in high order. I turned the vines once to get them out of the way of the cultivator. The potatoes were the Norton yam.

The way I bed, I lay down boards

on the bottom and put up sides and ends. This is to keep out the moles and the mice which follow the moles' tracks. I then put in about six inches of manure from the horse stables, as it heats sooner than that from the cow stable, then cover this manure with dirt about two inches and tramp down so as to make it firm. Then lay in the potatoes so they do not touch. Next I get sand where it is washed in the road or on the branch and cover the plantings about four inches deep. This will warm up and cause the sprouts to come sooner than any way I have ever tried. Don't get in too much of a hurry, like I saw a neighbor last spring, and go to watering with hot soap suds and scald your plantings.

Now how many I raised I can't say, as I did not measure them; but I got the finest lot of yams I ever saw. I weighed one that weighed 3 pounds and 14 ounces, one measured 8 inches long and 17 inches in circumference, another 12 inches long and 13 inches in circumference. Of course, down in the sweet potato section this would be considered a very common crop, but up among the hills where I live we seldom get such yams. I have raised the Hamans that were very much larger; but if we did not have anything better than the Hamans I would not bother to raise them.

I attribute the fine crop to the large amount of vegetable or humus-giving matter that was in the soil, causing it to hold the moisture and admit the heat from the sun, which is very necessary for the sweet potato. I have never been able to get any sweet potatoes out of a piece of hide-bound land.

W. H. TURRENTINE.
Alamance Co., N. C.

II.—All Crops Satisfactory.

Finds Red Top a Profitable Grass, and Hay-Making a Good Business.

Messrs. Editors: My three main crops this year, hay, corn, and tobacco, were entirely satisfactory as to yield. I have adopted a system of rotation as follows: Starting in October I sow with oats or wheat, redtop grass and sapling clover. The following fall I get a good crop of hay which I always cut in order to clean the land of stubble. The following spring I get a nice clean crop of hay, over one-half clover. The next crop will be nearly all redtop, and as soon as it is cut I sow land to peas, and follow next spring with corn. Sow crimson clover with corn and follow corn with either corn or tobacco.

My process of cultivation is to break land deep and cultivate corn flat with shallow cultivation, if possible after each rain. My average yield for past three years has been from 8 to 11 barrels per acre. My crop of tobacco this year, planted after rotation as stated above, will yield not less than 1,200 pounds per acre. I used about 400 pounds of 3-8-3 tobacco fertilizer per acre on tobacco, and 125 pounds 2-8-2 on corn, as I only want to use enough fertilizer on corn to give it a quick start, so as to cultivate as early as possible after planting. I always run steel drag with teeth well slanted back, over my corn just as it is coming up. My hay crops of redtop and sapling clover yield from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons per acre, owing to season.

I wish to impress on our farmers the value of redtop (which is a native of our Piedmont section) as a hay crop and land improver. I have never seen any analysis of its qualities, but I know by actual test that a fallow of redtop sod will produce more corn than red clover, and will make tobacco of fine quality when clover will usually fail. Moreover, it is easy to get a stand on thin land, wet or dry, where it would be a waste of time to sow clover. I have not confined myself to one crop for one year in stating results, as I know to make a big yield of any crop for one year the preparation must commence two years in advance.

I must add, as I have stated before, that I believe your paper is doing more to educate farmers up to a sensible plan of farming than any paper in our country. Your plan to get results of actual experiences of successful farmers and then hammer these ideas into the minds of slipshod, land-murdering farmers is resulting in great good, and will eventually place our standard of farming on a paying basis to all who have mind enough to take in good ideas and put them into execution.

S. C. ADAMS.

Charlotte Co., Va.

Don't fail to read Dr. Henry Wallace's message to Southern farmers. No more vital article has appeared in our columns for a long time.

III.—A Profitable Apple Crop.

What Spraying Did for an Apple Grower—Fifty Per Cent More Apples of Better Quality and Better Keepers.

Messrs. Editors: The crop that I think I have had the greatest success with is my apple crop.

For several years my apples had been badly infested with worms, a large portion of them falling off before they were ripe. What remained on the trees were of a very inferior quality. Professor Sherman, to whom I owe my success, relieved me of all my unsightly apples by holding an apple institute in my county. Very fortunately for me, I attended and find that I received great benefit from his instructions.

The first thing I did was to order a barrel sprayer, and I find it a success. Just as the bloom fell off I sprayed my trees with Bordeaux mixture prepared just as Professor Sherman did at his institute. Just twelve days from the first spraying I sprayed the second time, doing the work all myself so I would know it was done just as I wanted it done. The first benefit I noticed was that not a caterpillar was seen in my orchard this year. The May apples were free from worms, and the largest and soundest I ever saw. When the Junes came on they seem to be still better and hung on the trees much longer than ever before.

My greatest success was with my winter apples, especially my Winesaps that had always before badly specked and been of a very inferior quality. This fall I gathered from seven trees 15 bushels, and did not find a wormy one in the lot and not over over one-fourth of a bushel of specked ones. I think I can safely say that they were a third larger than ever before. The best comes yet—that is the keeping qualities. I never had apples to keep so well as my apples are keeping now.

I can safely say that spraying has added 50 per cent to my apple crop this year. Every neighbor I have will vouch for what I say. The foliage remained green on the trees until November 5th, when we had our first freeze. My spray outfit and the materials used in spraying did not cost over \$30.00; and I feel that I am well paid for my outlay, and will spray again next spring.

I. G. ROSS.

Locust Hill Farm, Stokes Co., N. C.

IV.—A Good Cotton Crop.

How Manure Changed a Worthless Field to a Paying One.

Messrs. Editors. In the spring of 1906 I had about ten acres of poor, worn, hillside land grown up in sedge and bushes. I cut up the few pines and plowed in the broom-sedge and planted it in corn. It scarcely paid for the planting. In 1907 it was sown in oats, and a fair crop only was harvested. I had hoped to follow the oats with cowpeas, but the price of seed convinced me that it would not pay, so the land was left to grow weeds.

Around my barn is an open lot in which about ten head of cattle, from one to two years old, were penned. They had access to shelter and were allowed to run out in pasture part of every day for exercise and water. Into this lot I hauled pine straw till it was about six inches deep. After this when I wished to haul in more straw I would scatter some acid phosphate and kainit and put the fresh straw on top of it. This was continued during the winter at convenient intervals. I used about three tons of phosphate and one ton of kainit. I had by spring about two hundred two-horse loads of this stuff, which I broadcasted on this ten acres in the latter part of April and plowed it under with a two-horse plow. On any rough places I used the disk harrow, then used the smoothing harrow over it all. Then I took a mixture of fifty pounds each nitrate of soda and acid phosphate, and distributed it with the cotton planter at the same time I planted the cotton. Thus I laid off the rows, distributed the fertilizer, and planted the seed all with one trip across the field.

The seed were planted during the first week in May. There came a rain before the cotton came up, and I used a weeder to break the crust as soon as it began to form. In a few days I used the King harrow, going twice to the row and stirring the surface of the earth effectually. I next hoed it to a stand and followed with the harrow. When the rains came a little more freely and the weeds and grass began to grow I used a Dunn plow with a long point and a long left-hand flange, making a plow much like an eighteen-inch sweep, but one that does better work in this stiff, hard land; with this I plowed very shallow till cultivation was completed. About the first of July I put one hundred