

Successful Cotton Growing.

It Depends on (1) Well-Selected Seed, (2) Proper Fertilization, (3) Frequent and Shallow Cultivation.

F YOU have not good seed you cannot make the best crop, no matter how well you fertilize and cultivate. What I call good planting seed is seed of the most highly improved varieties on the market to-day, and the price of these improved seed is so reasonable that there is not one single excuse for any farmer to plant any other. Experiment with the different varieties on a small scale at first, and when you have found a variety that is suited to your section and your land, begin then to improve it by selection.

After planting some of the best varieties I came to the conclusion that the medium boll sorts suited my section best, and from these I found the Toole to be the best. Then I began to improve it or at least trying to keep it up to what it was. At this time I was making 1/2 bale per acre, and often less, while now I can get 1 bale per acre, attributed almost entirely to the 3 years' selection I have given my seed. I began by selecting a few of the very best stalks I could find, and with the seed from these I planted my first breeding patch. The next year I again selected a few bushels of seed from the very best stalks I could find in this patch for my next years' seed patch, always planting my main crop from these patches after selections were made. This I have done for 3 years and I have almost doubled the yielding quantities of my cotton.

Last year I had a patch planted in individual stalk selections and a person would be surprised to know the great difference there was in the yield of seed from these individual plants. The majority of those selections made about 500 pounds of lint per acre, while I had one selection to make as high as 900 pounds of lint per acre. All had the same fertilizers and cultivation, but there was the seed from one stalk almost doubling the yield of seed from other stalks that the year before looked to be just as good as the best.

Unless the farmer has a small plantation gin outfit, or has access to one, it is an uphill business to keep his improved seed pure, much less make any progress as to further improvement. The farmer should own his gin anyway. The gasoline engine has made this a very feasible proposition. I have been running a 70-saw gin with one for the past 3 years, and I find it very satisfactory indeed.

Mix Fertilizers at Home.

The next great subject to me is fertilizers. Our soils are naturally very poor, and to get a greater profit from the use of improved seed we must fertilize well. Nearly all our farmers just take what the manufacturers make for them at the lowest price per ton. Very few farmers have the same grade of land all over their farm and for this reason they need different formulas for the different grades of land. Each year I conduct fertilizer tests on our farm and each year on different sections of the farm, and by this means I know how to mix for best results. I consider these tests worth hundreds of dollars to me each year, besides what they are worth to my neighbors who become interested enough to study the results which I publish in my local paper for their benefit. I always buy ingredients and do my own mixing.

I mix in a good tight wagon box or body just as we put it out, by putting a layer of acid phosphate, a lay-

er of cottonseed meal and then a layer of potash, repeating these layers until body is full. Drive to the field, cut directly through these layers, mix and put in distributors. This way of mixing can be done almost as quickly as you can load with ready mixed goods and you have saved \$2 to \$5 per ton and you know what you have.

Level and Shallow Cultivation.

Next comes cultivation. This must be of the best, or you lose the start you have made, if you began with good seed and proper fertilization. We break land in fall and winter with 2-horse plows, harrow and lay off rows with a very small plow, just large enough to make rows. In these marking-off furrows we run our fertilizer distributor (usually a Garrett machine) and on the foot of this distributor we have a narrow plow, about a 3-inch scooter and 14-inch heel scrape. The fertilizer falls directly behind this narrow plow and the heel scrape pulls the dirt back in the furrow over the fertilizers, leaving a very flat, broad furrow. The cotton planter is following immediately behind planting the seed. This gets the cotton planted on or below the level. When the plants are up they are barred off with a turn plow, using a fender board to protect the young plants. Cotton is then chopped to a stand and balance of cultivation is very rapid and shallow. By this method we destroy none of the cotton roots, the cotton will stand droughts 50 per cent better and will make fully one-fourth to one-third more cotton than the old way of planting on high beds. We do the work at a great deal less expense and hold the moisture better and thereby make better crops and more money. Of course, on poorly drained fields this plan could not be followed successfully.

Summed up we have: (1) good planting seed of the variety best suited to your section; (2) home-mixed fertilizers properly formulated according to the needs of your land; (3) level preparation, level planting, level, shallow and rapid cultivation, and (4) a fine cotton crop made and the farmer happy.

W. F. COVINGTON.

TWO USEFUL TOOLS.

They Are the Cutaway Disc Harrow and the Planet Jr. Wheel Hoe.

Two tools which I was strongly advised not to buy have turned out to be among the most useful on the place. These were a one-horse cutaway disc harrow and a Planet Junior double hand wheel hoe.

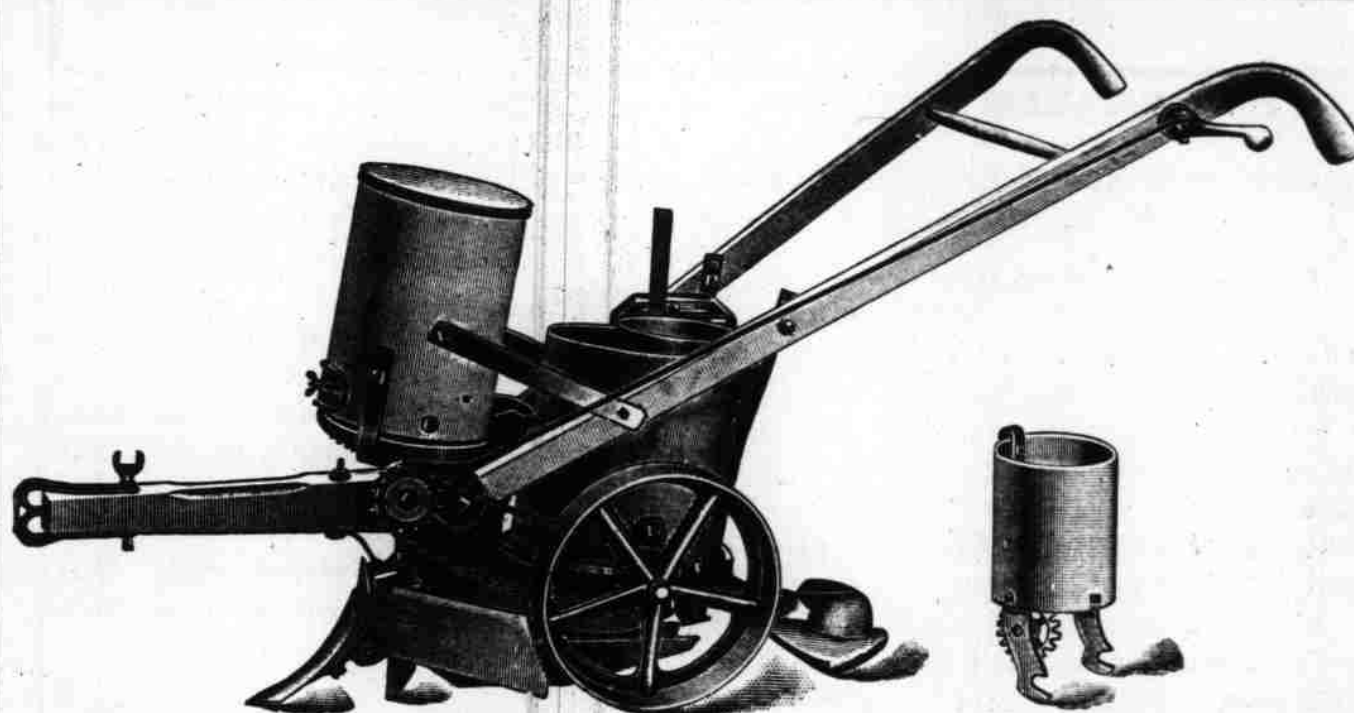
The disc beats anything I have tried thus far for fitting land after it has been plowed and for covering seed sown broadcast. I also expect to use it this season for the cultivation of two patches of dewberries. The spaces between the rows are so full of roots and vines that the ordinary cultivator does poor work, but the disc will cut up the obstructions and turn them under without tearing them out of the ground as the cultivator does.

The hand wheel hoe has been very useful in the home garden and is one of the best constructed tools of its kind I have ever seen.

WILBERT S. DREW.

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