

Professor Massey's Editorial Page.

Farm and Garden Work for October

IT HAS BEEN SHOWN at one of the experiment stations, whose bulletin I have mislaid and cannot just now lay my hand on, that thorough preparation of the land, fining the surface soil as much as possible, resulted in almost doubling the wheat crop compared with land of like quality alongside that was left loose and lumpy. I have often insisted upon this point, and have urged my readers that every time they put the harrow over the field they are adding bushels to the crop. I want to still further emphasize this for October is the time for doing this. From North Carolina southward I would defer sowing wheat till after there has been a light white frost, and in the meantime keep the harrow going on the land.

If wheat is following on a pea stubble or after corn or tobacco, do not re-plow the soil deeply, but let it remain settled from the earlier plowing so that the capillarity of the lower soil will be undisturbed, while you make a dust blanket over the top to retain the rising moisture. In a dry fall a field that is left to lie rough-plowed and dry out will have a hard time to germinate the seed, while one that has been kept constantly harrowed will have plenty of moisture, and October in the South is apt to be a very dry month.

The amount of wheat to be sown per acre will depend on the fertility of the soil. On strong clay loam well suited to wheat the plants will tiller or spread more than on thin soil, and less seed need be used. As an average amount I would say five pecks, but on thin land would sow six to seven pecks.

SOW OATS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.—I am satisfied that the best results in the oat crop will be had from sowing in September, at least as far north as North Carolina. South of this October will do very well. Then, too, if you have oats for seed that are thoroughly fanned and cleaned of trash and cheat seed, you can sow the crop better with the hoe wheat drill than in any other way. This will put the seed in deeper and at a uniform depth far better than any broadcast sowing, and the little furrows will feed in and protect the crop in winter just as well as the so-called open furrow method and will make heavier crops. But, as with wheat, make the soil fine and well settled, for there is more winter killing from sowing in a loose and badly prepared soil than from any other cause.

PUT THE COTTON UNDER SHELTER.—In most parts of the South crimson clover can still be sown among the cotton, and will give a winter cover, a place to use the manure spreader all winter and something to turn under in the spring that will give you a heavier corn crop. If you cannot get clover seed to sow, at least sow rye and save the fertility that would be washed out in the winter from bare soil.

Get the cotton out of the field as fast as possible and get it baled, and then do not rush it to market, but keep it under cover and market as the price suits. There is always a large amount of "weak" cotton grown by croppers, which depresses the market in the fall. Wait till that rush is over, but do not leave your bales outdoors on the ground to get damaged. Get it under shelter, and if there is a warehouse near you where you can store it, do so and take the receipts.

Trade the cottonseed for rmeal and hulls if you can get a fair exchange, and then determine that you will feed these in addition to the pea hay and shredded stover and make manure for your corn next spring. What a difference we would see on Southern farms if the cottonseed meal, pea hay and corn stover were all fed on the land that produces them!

It would be easy to grow as much cotton as ever on one-third the area while having beef and pork to sell and farms growing richer instead of poorer, and less of the farmers' money going into the pockets of the fertilizer trust.

TIE THE CORN SHOCKS WELL.—I have noticed in traveling about that a large part of the damage complained of in corn that is cut off at the ground is due to carelessness in shocking. I

have seen field after field where the shocks are tumbling open and exposing the interior to the rain. This is because so many fail to tie the tops of the shocks. Every shock should be bound at the top with tarred twine or binder twine. Have a rope of small size with an eyelet on one end. Pass this around the top of the shock, putting the other end of the rope in the eyelet and draw the tops together while another hand makes the tie. Then remove the rope to use on the next shock. Still, in a humid climate, there will be some damage, of course, on the outside, and I have seen shocks here this fall, where we have a seaside climate, that are quite black with fungus growth but bright inside. But, nevertheless, for the best use of the land it is better to cut the corn where one has wisely made plenty of other forage. The lack of peavine and clover hay is one of the principal reasons for adhering to the stripping of blades, and one having plenty of better forage can afford to save corn and have less valuable fodder by cutting it off at the ground.

Then, as soon as the corn in the shocks is well matured, get it out and haul in the fodder before the land gets too wet to haul over. It is far more comfortable to shuck the corn from the shocks in pleasant weather than to let it stay in the field till

A Personal Note.

THOSE WHO TAKE Editor Poe at his word and are piling in their cards, must take this as my reply to all, for I cannot answer each personally. The whole object of my life has been to help uplift the farming of the South, and I have prayed for the leading and direction of the All-wise One whose soil we till, and if I have accomplished anything of good it is because He has led me in a way I knew not. I have lived to see great improvement in the farming of the South, and wish that I could live to see still greater. I can hardly realize that I have spent seventy years of life, for I feel so young and active that it seems odd for people to call me old. I am 70, but they say a man is as old as he feels, and I feel like 40, and hope that I shall continue to feel that way for some time to come.

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one's hands are numbed with the cold in shucking it. Then, having the corn in shocks, one can prepare the land nicely with the disk or cutaway harrow for the fall grain.

WORK IN THE GARDEN.—My first sowing of spinach is now up well, also my lettuce plants for fall and winter. I shall make another sowing of spinach, for there is no greens so nice all winter. You can still sow Seven-top turnips for spring greens. When the cold weather comes throw some soil to each side of the rows as a protection.

Plant sets of the Yellow Potato onion now for green onions and ripe ones. White Queen, too, is a beautiful onion and very early, but it runs to seed in spring and should be used green only. Make furrows and fertilize well and bed on these and set the sets deeply in the ridges so that they will be on the surface when the soil is pulled from them in spring.

Have a few glass sashes and a frame for growing lettuce and radishes of the early sorts in spring after the lettuce has been cut. One who has never had a cold frame in the South has a faint idea of what an amount of healthful vegetables can be had from a small space.

HOW TO KEEP SWEET POTATOES.—As soon as frost nips the vines cut them off from the hills even if you do not dig at once, for the dead vines left on the hills will affect the roots. Dig, if possible, on a bright sunny day. Let the roots lie along the rows and sun till evening, and do not allow them to be thrown in heaps and bruised. Haul in in baskets or boxes, and never pile in a wagon body, for the keeping of the potatoes depends largely on the way they are handled in digging and storing.

If you have no potato house with heating apparatus you can store in banks under a rough shed. Make a thick layer of pine straw and put about twenty-five bushels in a heap and cover thickly with pine straw. Make a rough board shelter over the heaps, but put no earth on them till the sweating is over and the weather is getting cold. Then cover with six inches of dry soil.

Keeping the heaps dry is of great importance for the dry soil will keep out more cold than wet soil. I have kept them sound till June in this way.

Points in Selecting Cotton Seed.

THE "AGRICULTURAL NEWS," published in Barbados, gives the following points to be considered in the selection and improvement of cotton seed:

"(1) To maintain uniformity in the cotton production.

"(2) To increase yields by producing a heavier bearing plant, and one which matures all its bolls.

"(3) To produce plants with a disease-resisting power.

"(4) To produce a plant which yields a minimum quantity of weak fiber; hence, one which gives a stronger and less wasteful cotton.

"(5) To increase the quality of the cotton as regards fineness and length.

"(6) To produce a plant adapted for the conditions of the district in which it is being developed."

I suppose that the first item means the maintaining of a standard cotton for the district in which it is grown, and hence would more fairly be included in the sixth item, for in all of our selection of cotton seed we must have in mind the necessities of the climate in which we are working. In the upper South this means an early maturing cotton, of course, and in the demand brought about for an early cotton in the weevil-infested sections, it becomes of greater importance for the upper South to produce seed for that section.

As to the second item, the object of any breeder of cotton should to get the heaviest producing plant attainable, even if in our climate we cannot hope to get a plant that will mature all its bolls, though in exceptional seasons we may mature the top crop.

The third item is important in many sections where the cotton wilt has developed. There the selection of seed from resistant plants becomes of vital importance, and it has been shown that this resistant character can be perpetuated.

Then, as regards the fourth and fifth items, it is certainly desirable to produce a strong fiber and a fine and long one. But then another question arises: "Is it practicable to greatly increase the length and fineness of the fiber without sacrificing earliness and productivity?" So far as has been shown the shorter fibered cotton is, as a rule, the earliest and most short-jointed, and hence most productive of bolls, and in producing a plant we must have always in view the demands of our climate as is indicated by the sixth item. What might be accomplished in the tropical climate of Barbados would not at all apply to the upland cotton of the great Cotton Belt. We would, therefore, make the important points for our section the productiveness and short-jointed habit of the plant, and so far as is consistent with this and earliness, we would pay attention to the length and fineness of the fiber, but would rather sacrifice these for earliness and productive character.

To attain these we must have a separate seed patch for seed only, from which we can eliminate all long-jointed and prospectively inferior plants as soon as they develop and before the blooms have infected those around. It is the same principle that is true with any plant we wish to improve. We must remove unfavorable influences around it. It will not be sufficient to merely select seed from the best plants if bad plants are blooming all around them. We must endeavor, so far as possible, to insure the parentage of the seed from the best plants only. Starting then with the best improved seed attainable, we plant the seed patch, and having in mind the ideal cotton plant for our section, see that only those plants are left to bloom and make seed that come somewhere near that ideal. By sticking closely to this year after year we shall finally get what we are after.

Have you ever noticed that many of the Northern farm papers made by city men, treat their farmer readers as if they were children or half-idiots? The silly, patronizing, so-called "heart-to-heart" talks in which the publishers engage, patting themselves on the back and playing the demagogue generally, are enough to make a self-respecting farmer sick with disgust. We notice that none of our Southern farm papers deal in such sickening gush, and this is another reason for patronizing papers made in the South by men who live in the South.