



What Farmers Want to Know

By W. F. MASSEY

Notes and Comments

OUR snap beans planted the first of September were caught by the only frost we have had in October, on the 23rd. It was hardly a killing frost, but it nipped the beans and destroyed the bloom. Since that we have had weather warm enough for July, and but for that one frost would probably have gotten some beans from this late planting. But it is evident that planting snap beans the first of September is here too risky and we had better plant the last crop the middle of August. We did have beans on the table from earlier planting up to October 25.

One effect of the late fall is curious. One of my double hollyhock plants, which bloomed full in early summer, has shot up a new stalk and is now in bloom the first of November. I have never before seen a hollyhock in bloom at this time in the fall.

Several of our friends have written about the failure of their Lima beans to make a good crop. If they planted the Large White Lima so commonly grown in the North I am not surprised at the small crop, for they will not make the crop in the South that they do in the North, and I have long ago quit planting them and always plant the small lima, our Southern butter bean. This summer I have them on about 60 feet of wire fence. We had all we could possibly consume green, and gathered over a bushel of ripe ones in the hull which will make enough to last us all winter.

The salsify is now in use and will be through the winter. The roots are of fair average size now, but really will not stop growing till the weather gets the real winter cold. Boiled and made into cakes and fried, they make a very good imitation for oyster fritters.

The Green Curled Scotch kale plants are now as large as ordinary collards, and with a little more frost they will be in excellent condition for greens. Then we have the spinach, too, the best of greens, and plenty of leeks to last till the green onions are ready in spring.

Kudzu Plants

THOSE who have Kudzu plants for sale should advertise them in The Progressive Farmer, as inquiries are coming in from parties who wish to buy for planting.

Will Have to Sell Sweet Potatoes by the Yard

"I HAVE a lot of sweet potatoes planted on light sandy soil which grew watermelons last year. The vines have grown well and densely cover the ground, but in digging the potatoes there is practically one good potato in a hill and then a lot of long roots. It looks as though I will have to sell them by the yard instead of the bushel."

Evidently there is a deficiency in phosphoric acid and potash in the soil, and plenty of nitrogen. This is shown by the vigorous growth of the vines and the scarcity of the potatoes. Sweet potatoes, and Irish, too, are largely starch, in the sweet potato to a considerable extent changed to sugar. It is the nature of the plant to store starch in roots after supplying the needs of the top growth, as a future need of the plant. The potash and phosphorus are essential to the making and storing of starch, and if there is not enough of these to complete the job of supplying top growth and root formation, the roots are the

parts that will suffer, for they get the surplus. The sweet potato crop is one that is best made by shallow plowing. They make better shaped roots by having a hard bottom to prevent their running into long, stringy roots, and they should not be hilled up as high as was formerly the practice. An ordinary sweep will make all the hill needed.

There Is No Really Best in Every Respect

"PLEASE write me at once what is the best variety of strawberry for this upper Piedmont section of North Carolina."

There are a great many very fine varieties of strawberries, but not one of them the best in all respects. The nearest I know to be best is the late variety called the Chesapeake. But for the home garden we want as long a season as practicable. Hence you should plant early, mid-season and late varieties. I would suggest, as being as good as any, the Early Ozark, Big Joe and Chesapeake.

refer to it. You can make a strong decoction of tobacco stems in boiling water, and after cooling use it as a spray on the plants. You can get tobacco dust and use that freely on them. You can destroy them more quickly by getting from the seedsmen the preparation of sulphate of nicotine sold under the names of Aphine and Black Leaf 40.

Irish Potato Prospects

"WHAT do you think of the Irish potato situation as regards the prospect for Southern planting next spring?"

So far as I can see, there will not be any abnormal conditions in the potato market next summer. It looks as though there will be no surplus of old potatoes on the Northern markets, so that the early crop from the South will have a fair chance and a reasonably profitable market. That is the way it looks this far ahead. I may have to change this opinion, but if so I will try to keep the readers of The Progressive Farmer posted on the prospects.

Nut Grass in Garden

"GIVE me a practicable method of getting rid of coco or nut grass in a garden."

Do as I did, as I have often told in

best corn in the field was right in that wire grass patch, and he admitted that this was true. The wire grass had simply made him work faster and more frequently and had furnished a little badly needed organic decay. On sandy soil it is not hard to get rid of this grass. I cleared a piece that was a complete sod by running a plow just under the sod and not more than three inches deep. This was harrowed with a spike harrow and then the steel hay rake was used to get out all that could be gotten in this way, and I hauled it to a marsh. The land was then put in truck crops and kept clean and I had no bother from the grass. On a clay loam I would follow this with smothering crops of peas and clover.

Keeping Irish Potatoes

"PLEASE tell me how to bury Irish potatoes for winter preservation, how deep to cover them, etc."

The conditions for keeping Irish potatoes are total darkness and a temperature but little above the freezing point. In your normal winter this can be done by merely putting them in a heap and covering well with earth. But in a winter like the last one, it will be better to cover them first with pine straw under and over them and then with earth. A spot shaded from the sun will be best, for the sun in mild spells may warm the hills to such an extent as to start them to sprouting.

Figs Die in Winter

"I HAVE some fig bushes on the east side of my barn. They die down every winter and spring up in the spring and set fruit, but it never ripens, as it is grown too late. How can I manage them?"

You cannot grow figs in the interior in an elevated section like Granville County, N. C., without winter protection. I have grown figs by the bushel in a very cold locality in northern Maryland, but little south of the Pennsylvania line, where we had zero and below every winter. My bushes were branched from the ground. In the fall after the leaves fell the bushes were cleared of the surplus shoots that are apt to grow in a mass in the center, and any old stunted wood removed. Then the branches were gathered in four bunches and spread on the ground. A bean pole or similar stick was laid across each bunch and pegged fast to the ground. Then the earth was piled over the whole thickly, making a mound-like four-pointed star. In the spring they are taken up and cleared of the earth and the young figs that were set in the fall soon swell out and make the early and best crop. In fact, the only crop we could ripen there. You can do this in Granville or you can set up cut-down corn stover thickly around the bushes and tie it in at the top. The only danger in this is that the field mice may harbor there and bark the trees. Figs do better here near the salt water and also in North Carolina than they do inland. Right on the shores of the Chesapeake they grow to large size and seldom get hurt, while a mile or two inland they get killed to the ground.

THE BUSINESS FARMER'S CALENDAR: FIVE THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK AND NEXT

BE WORKING out your plans for next year with reference to crops and livestock to be grown and fertilizers and implements needed.

2. See if you cannot devise a better and more satisfactory method of keeping your records and accounts than you have heretofore used.

3. Don't leave the scattering cotton in the fields another week; get it out without delay.

4. Keep all stored cotton perfectly dry, else the loss from exposure will more than offset any increase in price.

5. Be making plans to terrace all your rolling fields this fall and winter, and likewise to drain all wet spots that should be producing good crops.

These will carry you through the spring season. Then if you want some to run through the latter part of the summer and into late fall, get some of the Progressive and set them in spring and keep the blossoms off till July and then let them bloom till frost. Then next spring let them make the spring crop and plant a new bed of them and turn under these after fruiting, for they will not amount to much later if let bear full in spring.

Why Not Read the Paper?

"MY COLLARDS are bothered with lice and Lincoln bugs. I have kept the latter pretty well picked off, but can find no remedy for the lice. Have tried ashes and lime without success. My collards last year were almost completely ruined by the lice. Several people told me that a freeze would completely destroy them, but this is not true. Please tell me how to get rid of them, as I want to be in time this year."

You are a long way behind time now. Every season for years, time and again, I have told on this page how to prevent and destroy the aphides or plant lice of all kinds, whether on cabbages, collards or any other plant, whether green, gray or black, but people keep coming with the same question every year, apparently because they do not read the paper.

If you had used tobacco stems or tobacco dust liberally in the manuring of the ground for the collards, there would have been few or none come out, for they come from the ground in the first place. Then if lice are found on any plant, the only thing to destroy them is tobacco in some form or the products of tobacco. Now please copy this down where you can

The Progressive Farmer. Simply do not allow it to grow above ground. The difficulty in most places is that people let the garden run to weeds in the fall and the nut grass ripens seed abundantly, and there are a thousand plants grown from the seed to every one coming from the nuts. If the garden is kept absolutely clean all the year round there will be no chance for nut grass or any other weed. If the nut grass is not allowed to make green leaves above ground the roots will soon perish. This is no theory but a fact, for I have done it in my own garden, which was a bed of nut grass when I bought it, and today it would puzzle you to find any weeds of any sort in it. I simply do not allow them to grow, and that is the only way to keep a garden. Nut grass chopped off today will be up tomorrow, but keep at it and do not let a weed beat you.

Bermuda or Wire Grass

"I PLANTED peas in a field where there is a great deal of wire grass. When I mowed and stacked the hay I got a great deal of the wire grass in the hay. If I feed this hay and put the manure on other fields that are not infested, will the wire grass come from the seed?"

I do not think there is much danger from the seed, for the Bermuda or wire grass makes little if any seed north of Arizona. You also ask if there is any way to get rid of wire grass. Of course it is a pest in cultivated fields, but really it acts as a stimulus to exertion. Last year I was on a farm near me with a friend who owned it. We were looking through his corn field, and he showed me a spot that is infested with Bermuda or wire grass, and asked me how to get rid of the pest. I showed him that the

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