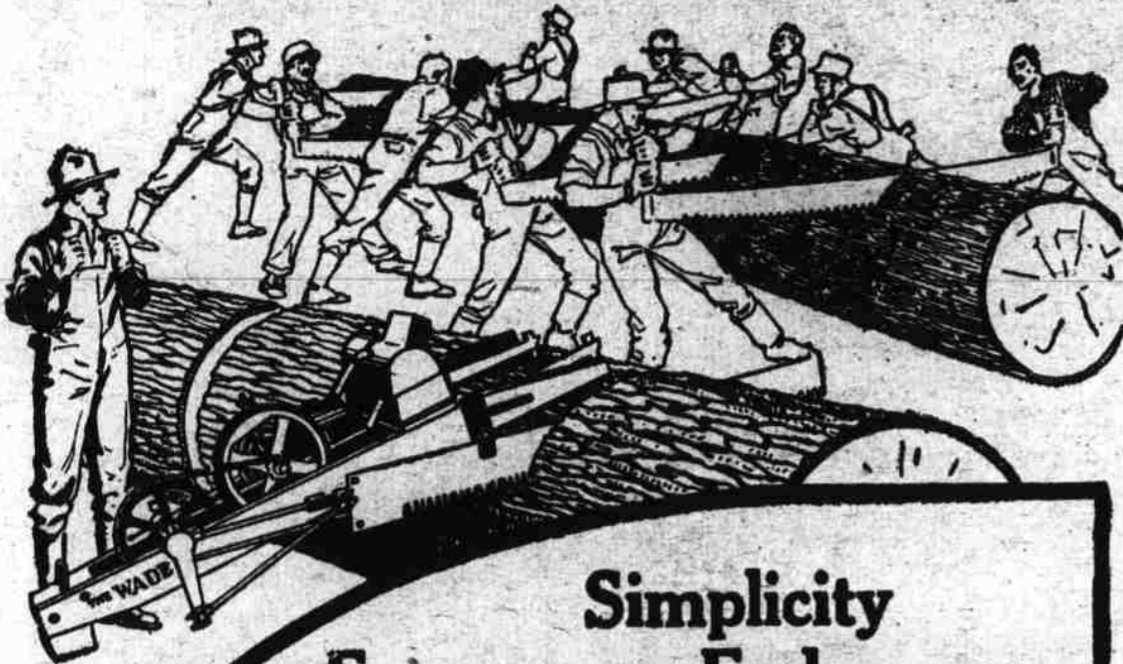


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Plant More Spring Oats

Suggestions as to Land, Varieties, Planting and Fertilizers

By E. F. CAUTHEN

THE scarcity of corn and the high price of other feeds make the planting of spring oats a very important consideration for most farmers in the Cotton Belt. The farmer who is going to run short of corn and has land suitable for spring oats cannot afford to pass lightly over this means of growing feed to meet his shortage; it is an easily made, cheap, and reasonably sure crop.

Oats will not make a paying crop if they are planted on poor land, nor do they yield well if the spring is dry and hot. It is a crop that requires a great deal of nitrogen and moisture.

To get cool weather, the crop should be planted as soon as the danger of winter-killing is over. In the southern part of the Cotton Belt they may be planted in early February, in the middle part of the Belt about February 15, and in the upper part of the Belt, two or three weeks later.

Suitable Land for Spring Oats

TO GET moisture sufficient to make a good crop, they should be planted on rather low land—not on wet land nor land that is liable to overflow in the spring—but on moist bottom land. The bottom is usually fertile and cool. Planted on bottom land, oats usually get high enough to cut and produce a good heavy crop of grain and straw.

If bottom land is not available for this crop, then take some of your best upland—either sandy loam or clay soil, and plant it. Oats can be grown on almost any kind of soil, if the supply of plant food and moisture is sufficient.

If the land is covered with trash, stalks and other refuse or is very hard, plow it before seeding to cover up the litter and to break the soil. In case the soil is soft or sandy and free from trash, the plowing may be omitted without danger of loss.

On unplowed land the seed may be sowed broadcast and covered with a disk harrow, Gee Whiz, Acme, or some shallow cultivating implement that will not cover the seed over one

or two inches deep. On plowed land and some unplowed land the seed oats may be planted with a grain drill if one is available. The old method of sowing the seed by hand and plowing under with a one-horse turner or twister is slow and expensive. When the seed are covered deeply, it takes them a long time to come up and the stand may be defective when they do come up.

Fertilizers and Varieties

OATS require a good supply of plant food to produce a paying crop. On most upland, 200 pounds of acid phosphate per acre at time of planting will be beneficial. When the plants begin to spread, that is about the end of March or early in April, a top-dressing of 75 pounds per acre of nitrate of soda will greatly increase the yield of seed and straw and almost insure the oats getting tall enough to be easily cut with a binder.

Oats planted on rich bottom land will probably not be greatly benefited from the use of acid phosphate and nitrate of soda.

The early varieties usually give the best yields. Among the early varieties that are suited for spring planting are Burt, Fulghum and Dixie, a variety that closely resembles Burt. The Red Rust-proof varieties do not usually grow as tall as those named above, and therefore are not so well suited for spring planting. If the planting is made early on fertile land and the season is favorable, the Red Rust-proof varieties, Appler, Culberston, Bancroft, Texas Red Rust-proof, Hundred-bushel, etc., will grow tall enough to harvest and yield a good crop of seed and straw.

In case the need of feed is urgent or the oats do not get high enough to harvest with the binder they may be cut with a mower for hay when they are blooming or in the dough stage. The oat plant cut at this age and properly cured makes an excellent hay that is relished by mules, horses and cattle.

Plant a few acres of spring oats, if you have no fall oats planted.

Garden and Orchard Notes—What to Do This Week and Next

EVERY person who has not started the garden work should get busy at once. Fences should be repaired, tools should be gone over and put in good workable condition, and new ones supplied where they are needed. Scatter manure broadcast on the ground, if this hasn't already been done.

For the early tomatoes, grow a few in a box. These can be started in the house and kept in a sunny window during warm days. It is not one bit too early to make preparation for this kind of work. Get the box, soil and seed ready, sow in late February or early March, and by giving careful attention to them, plants will be ready for setting in early April.

In sowing tomato or other seed in boxes for early planting, use soil that is full of humus. It is a good plan to make shallow trenches, sow the seed in them and cover by sprinkling fine sand on top. This is better than packing soil on top of them.

A far better method of growing these plants, of course, is in the hot-bed. Where a hotbed or cold frame is not available, then the proper thing to do is to grow a few of these in

boxes as outlined above. It will not do to sow seed like tomatoes, eggplant and other tender vegetables in a cold frame earlier than late March or early April, in the middle and upper part of the South, and possibly late February or early March in the lower part of the South.

Those home gardeners who have not planted Irish potatoes should get ready and do this at once. February is the best month for planting these in the middle part of the South, and in the upper part of the South, late February and early March and on up to April. In the lower part of the South, even January or early February is all right. Certainly no home garden is complete without having a good supply of potatoes planted.

Get ready for the pole beans by supplying brush or other material that is used for these to run on. The supplying of this material is a small matter, but it is far better to do it now and have it ready than to wait until right at the time it is needed, when one will usually be busy with other work.

In the lower part of the South, and even in most of the middle section of the South, it is none too early to take a chance on sowing a few radishes, lettuce, mustard, etc. All of