



With a Hand Book on the Rearing of Vegetables, for Reference Purposes, I Prepared the Ground, and Planted Probably a Half a Million Seeds.

Bugs

By James J. Montague

I AM told that some scientists believe that long after man has perished from the earth the insect world will continue to prosper and increase. It really was not necessary for scientists or any one else to tell me that. I have been convinced of it ever since I began to live in a small town and undertook to raise a small garden.

At the beginning it was partly a vegetable garden. I had heard that no vegetables are really good unless fresh from the soil, and that these are little more than second rate unless raised by one's self. So I bought seeds and fertilizers and curious tools and fell to work. With a hand book on the rearing of vegetables, for reference purposes, I prepared the ground, enriched the soil with expensive chemicals the book instructed me to buy, and planted probably a half a million seeds. Then pretty well spent by my exertions, I waited for the fruit of my labors to become ripe for the harvest.

It was then I discovered that the adage to the effect that everything comes to him who waits was invented by some malevolent rascal who had a grudge against his fellow men, and well understood how to satisfy it. I waited. But the bugs didn't. First came the cut worms, which like burglars never go out on their jobs till after nightfall. Then they gather together in schools, and creep over the surface of the ground in parallel columns. Each cut worm, when he arrives at the rising stem of a newly planted vegetable, halts, gnaws a hole half way through it, and then moves on to the next one. He could of course eat all the way through the stem, but it gets a little woody in the middle, and he is careful of his teeth. Eating half a stem is easier, and it kills the plant just as dead, which latter, of course, is one of his purposes.

After the cut worms have been destroyed by pursuing each one down to his hole, prying open his jaws and filling them with arsenate of lead, the aphids gather together. The aphids are extremely small bugs, which the ants use for cows, for the tiny things contain juices which are to the ants as nectar and ambrosia. Although some of my fellow gardeners insist that I am wrong, I am certain that the ants, in order that these cattle of theirs shall be good providers, catch them and convey them to the most luscious vegetables and to the most fruitful trees. I am sure of this because whenever I clamber up a plum tree to see if the fruit is setting, I find on an average one ant to every 200,000 aphids—this is merely an estimate—and I am sure the ants are acting in the capacity of vaqueros.

You can destroy aphids by spraying them with kerosene, but this has the disadvantage of killing the trees along with the aphids, and when you have cut down a dead tree, and purchased and planted another it is too late to hope for a fruit crop that same year. If any vegetation gets by the cut worms and the aphids, moths of a number of varieties find it out by some secret underground means of communication they have built up through the years and deposit their young, of whom they must be extremely fond, for they leave them where the very choicest vegetables are handy by.

These creatures blindly hunting about for more bushes, and not finding them.

You find, after gardening a very short time that Nature, like man, is progressive, and is already making extensive use of man's discovery of germs. Time was when bugs alone competed for some mysterious prize, which with the final crumbling of the universe is to be awarded to the fittest to survive. But lately the germs, observing the ease with which beetles and aphids and other creatures make a living, have decided that a rich field is ripe for the harvest, and have taken to the soil. Our tulips, which once had nothing the matter with them except the results of occasional neglect, have this year been showing signs of premature decay. We called in a tulip doctor who said they had a newly discovered germ disease. The progenitors of this malady are microbes which hide in the soil till they observe that the family is taking pride in the stately slender stemmed blossoms. Then they permit themselves to be carried up in the sap stream to the petals, which they proceed to curl and after the fashion of the frizz papers which our great aunts used to wear before the days of bobs and permanents. Once these germs fall to work there is one thing to do, which is to pull the tulips up by the roots and never attempt to raise any more. If you do you will fill the soil with germs, who possess infinite patience, and then, their appetites keyed up by long waiting, will proceed to do their stuff once more.

After you have learned, as you must, that flowers and vegetables are becoming extinct on the earth, you may decide to provide pleasant surroundings by raising a lawn. While you make this decision it is conveyed by some mysterious air telegraph to a growing army of beetles, which, driven out of Asia by overcrowding, stowed away on freight vessels and came East to grow up with the country. Arriving on the Pacific coast, the beetles hitch-hiked across the country till they reached Chicago, and then, wishing one another good luck, spread fan wise eastward. Some of them, having an eye for lofty places, proceeded to climb the stately eastern elms, and denude them of verdure, often overnight. But here man was on the alert. It takes a fine elm tree two or three hundred years to grow to important size, and many of them were on the estates of the moneyed class. Spraying machines were bought and put to work and gradually the beetles became discouraged.

But with them came consins of theirs who fed on grass. These insect Nebuchadnezzars, as soon as they found a stretch of greenward, dug in and left baby grubs about six inches under the soil. When these hatched and looked about them for foliage they decided that the young grass roots were excellent eating, and these they masticated till, lacking roots, the grass ceased to grow any more. If you have a "brown patch" in your lawn, you will know what is the matter. Some million Asiatic beetles are waxing fat under your sod, and will presently fly forth only to return again and start another grub hatchery.

You can cope with these insects by spreading lead poison on the ground, but not for long. The little rascals are discovering that lead is not particularly hygienic nutriment, and soon the only way to destroy them will be to take out each grass root and throttle the bugs you find munching on it. That will take a long time, and most people will find it irksome. Time was when I was extremely sorry for Adam and Eve, who had to leave their garden just when it was at its gorgeous best. But perhaps if they had not sacrificed their prospects by misconduct, and had lived as long as some of the Patriarchs who followed them into the world, they would find Eden hardly worth the trouble to protect against bugs.

Glove Making in Czechoslovakia. Gloves have been manufactured in Czechoslovakia for nearly 150 years.

Uncommon Sense

By JOHN BLAKE

Every few minutes, as I write, a motor car dashes by—going somewhere. Every few hours, on the acquainted clock, a big airplane whizzes over my head—carrying mail and passengers between New York and Boston.

From distance I can hear at regular intervals passenger trains thundering by, twelve or fifteen cars carrying people from where they were to where they will be before a great while.

The traveler is everywhere. The people of the world are rapidly getting better acquainted.

I suppose that long before my children are as old as I am now they will—if they have enough money—be whisked from New York to London overnight, the journey being just as safe as behind an ox team was in the "days of forty-nine."

Safer even. There were Indians in those days, and they were prejudiced against pale faced strangers. Somehow or other, in spite of the kick-ups in foreign countries, among which was the Great War, I think this raising of travel is going to be helpful to this race of ours.

We are all pretty much the same kind of folks, no matter what language we speak, or what manners and customs we have inherited from our ancestors.

Travel "for to admire and for to see" will be of great help in getting rid of bias and hatred which have come down from so far back that nobody remembers where they started.

The United States has absorbed thousands of people from many different foreign nations. They are as good Americans now as were the men who fought in the Revolution.

In another thousand years we shall probably have a common language, and the word "foreigner" will be heard no more.

That is a long time to look forward to. But it will come, although you and I shall not get much benefit out of it.

And as easier methods of transportation are discovered, and the peoples of all parts of the world begin to know and understand and make allowances for one another, that mutual acquaintance will start world civilization toward permanent and wholesome peace.

It will not come in my time or yours. But one of our functions in this life is to make the future safer for our great-grandchildren. And that ought to be satisfaction enough.

Some months ago two men flew without a stop from Germany to New York. Such a flight would have astonished the world even after Wilbur Wright came to New York with his frail little flying machine and twice circled the Statue of Liberty.

Perhaps not tomorrow, but within a very few years men will fly easily from Europe to the western side of the American continent.

Hardly do you find an issue of an American newspaper which does not record some event which fifty years ago would have been regarded as a miracle.

But with all this progress, how much has humanity changed? People talk today of a great impending European war.

There is not a big city in the country which is not from time to time, and often constantly, invaded by gangsters and racketeers.

OUR COMIC SECTION

Events in the Lives of Little Men



THE FEATHERHEADS

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO GET FELIX—I SAW A LOVELY BATHROBE AND I THOUGHT I'D GET THAT



I WAS GOING TO GET THAT WHEN I SAW A VERY SWANKY ZIPPER TRAVELING BAG—



SO—THERE I WAS—I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO DECIDE ON WHICH TO GET



IT WAS A TIE!



FINNEY OF THE FORCE

LO, FINNEY—YOU'RE NOT LOOKIN' SO VERY PERT TODAY!



Loosen Up

WHY DON'TCHA GO TO THE DOCTOR—YOU DON'T WANT TO BE TAKIN' ANY CHANCES



—BUT THEN YA THOUGHT OF HOW MUCH HE'D CHARGE YA—IS IT A SHARP PAIN YA GOT?

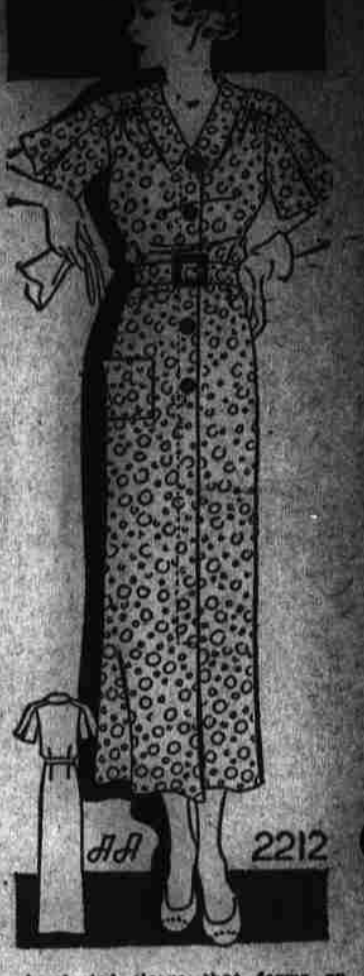


WELL OI WUZ THINKIN' 'BOUT GOIN', BUT—



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PATTERN 2212



A pleated sleeve that forms an epaulet shoulder is new and creates a striking effect. (Note the back view, too.) Add to that, the center front buttoning that is so much the rage, soft gathers above the bust line, and a patch pocket, and you've a shirtmaker frock of unrivaled chic. It's a grand thing to jump into for that unexpected jaunt, and is smartly at home in practically any daytime environment. Make it in a new printed linen or cotton, or a cravat silk. It's stunning, too, in plaided or striped sports seersucker or cotton.

Pattern 2212 is available in sizes 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 and 32. Size 16 takes 3 1/2 yards 36 inch fabric. Illustrated step-by-step sewing instructions included. SEND FIFTEEN CENTS (15c) in coins or stamps (coins preferred) for this pattern. Write plainly name, address, and style number. BE SURE TO STATE SIZE. Address orders to the Sewing Circle Pattern Department, 243 West Seventeenth Street, New York City.

SMILES

POLITE INCARCERATION

"Do you think you can keep that desperado in jail?" "I don't know," answered Cactus Joe. "We're doin' our best. We have fired two cooks he didn't like, given him credit at the licker dispensary and subscribed for all the magazines. But somehow we don't seem able to keep him satisfied."

Why Not? Wife—I think you ought to talk to me while I sew. Hubby—Let's change it around and you sew while I read.—Pathfinder Magazine.

Once Is Enough Inquisitive Old Lady Passenger—Do boats like this sink often? Sailor—Only once, ma'am.

The Alibi Chow Hound—Hey, messman, who's wrong with these eggs? Mess Cook—Don't ask me, I only laid the table.

WNU-4 22-31



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