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REAL RURAL READING

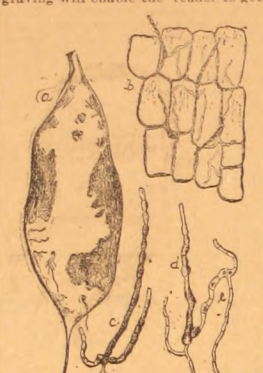
WILL BE FOUND IN THIS DEPARTMENT.

Fungus Troubles That are Difficult to Reach—Make an Effort to Save Labor—A Cheap Creamer—The Cultivation of Fruit.

Scurf on Sweet Potatoes.

Growers are beginning to ask of the experiment stations what can be done to prevent scurf on sweet potatoes, and rusty specimens are sent in with the question: If these are used in the hotbed for sprouts will they communicate the scurf to the next crop?

This scurf, or russeted skin, says the American Agriculturist, is caused by a vegetable growth, and it is well to know this before considering any methods of attempting to prevent its appearance. The dark mold is a low form of fungus similar to the various kinds that grow upon all sorts of organic substances. It consists of microscopic threads, that penetrate the sweet potato for a short distance and then sends branches to the surface. The skin of the potato at the places infested takes on a brown color, due partly to the dark color of the fungus threads, but more particularly because the superficial layers of cells of the potato have been killed and thereby turned brown. The engraving will enable the reader to get



a clearer idea of the scurf fungus. At a is represented a potato partly coated over with the scurf, and at those places where the mold is worst the root has taken on a wrinkled appearance, due to the drying out of some of the juice in the cells near the surface, or its absorption by the filaments of the fungus that has been feeding upon them. This tendency to shrink of the affected potatoes, together with the less attractive color are the two chief disadvantages of the scurf. It is, however, true, that a scurfy potato, having, as it has, the skin more or less roughened and disorganized, is more subject to the attack of other forms of mold, some of which are very rapid in their work of destruction. Thus the soft rot fungus may get a foothold in the skin of a scurfy potato, while a smooth, healthy skinned one might go free. At b is shown a highly-magnified view of the surface of a scurfy potato, and several projecting filaments of the mold are represented. The branching, finer threads of the fungus beneath the skin are seen as indistinct and irregular lines. One of the free, upright, dark chains of cells, is shown highly magnified at c, with two younger filaments arising from the same base. At d is another chain, with less regular cells than at c, and a larger portion of the branched threads, from below the surface, shown at e. This scurf is upon the roots above the potatoes, extending sometimes to the surface of the ground.

From the fungus nature of the scurf it is natural to suppose that the trouble may spread from the affected root to the sprouts, should a scurfy potato be used in the hotbed. It would be a wise precaution to exclude all but roots that are free from the mold. As seems to be true with the scab of Irish potatoes, so here the chief inducing condition is the presence in the soil of large quantities of rotting manure. Sweet potatoes, as has been abundantly demonstrated, can be grown profitably without so much manure, and, in fact, without any. Commercial fertilizers may be used much more extensively than generally supposed, to the special advantage of reducing the amount of the various forms of rot, decay, and blights of various sorts. In time it is hoped that some method of treating the hotbed, or the sprouts as they are set, or possibly the field plants, may be found that will materially diminish the scurf, the soil rot, and the black rot, while at the same time augmenting the profits from the crop. Fungus troubles that are located below ground are among the most difficult to reach with a positive remedy, and precautionary measures are, thus far, most to be depended upon.

Farm Machinery.
So far as possible avoid leaving machinery standing out in the hot sun when not in use. One of the best paying investments on the farm is a good shed, under which machinery that is used more or less through the season can be kept when not needed in the field. The failure to give proper care to the machinery needed to carry on the work costs the farmer a good deal of money that could readily be saved. A few days' exposure to a hot sun is nearly or quite as injurious as one or two hard storms, and in many cases it would save time to bring it to the house and store under shelter rather than let it stand out, as more or less time is required to get

just it properly. In a majority of cases machinery will prove cheaper than hand labor and can readily be made to pay a good profit on its cost. provided, of course, it is cared for, so that it can be made to do what should reasonably be expected of it. In harvesting and haying, especially, machinery is necessary when it is important to push the work as much as possible, taking all reasonable advantages to save time. It is very often the case that machinery is damaged more by want of proper care than by using. It costs less to buy machinery in good working condition than long as it is worth repairing than to use as long as possible without any work and then be at the expense of giving a thorough overhauling, saving nothing of the increased risk of a breakdown at a time that a considerable loss would be occasioned. It rarely pays to manage machinery on the make-shift plan; it should either be kept in good working condition or be discarded for something that is worth keeping in good repair.

Care of Animals.

There is nothing lost by proper attention to animals. A little neglect at the proper time may be the means of losing an animal. Such an instance came under our observation only a few days since. A male colt had been castrated, and after a few days' confinement was turned to pasture and there allowed to remain during the changes incident to storms of rain. From some cause, probably the exposure connected with the condition of the animal in consequence of the operation of castration, the horse was attacked with lock-jaw, and not being looked after as he should have been, the case grew worse and worse until relieved by death. There should be no excuse for neglect of proper care, attention or treatment by the owner of an animal, and the law should take hold of the matter with sufficient force to compel proper care or else deprive such person of the ownership or custody of an animal. In this enlightened age, with societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, there should be proper care bestowed upon them.

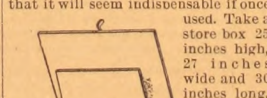
Live Stock Notes.

Be sure the calves have shade and good water. Sour swills cannot be fed to young pigs with profit. There is no single breed that possesses only good qualities. The use of pure-bred boars on common sows gives good results. In building the hog shelters make them small and cheap. It is too often the case that the mania for crossing is carried too far. A fatal mistake is often made in inbreeding a boar bred on the farm. Now increase the working team's grain ration and feed old, sound hay. A very little care only is needed to teach the pigs how and where they can eat. Give the dog what is in many cases given the hog and a better profit can be realized. When the pigs are weaned is one of the best times to castrate and spay; do not neglect.

Scarcity will not always govern prices, the cost of production often has much to do with it.

The ordinary man cannot judge a horse when he first sees him. Before you purchase a horse lead him down hill, drive him, and watch carefully every movement. Does it pay to buy feed for stock? asks a subscriber. It depends, of course, upon circumstances. If we purchase feed we can keep more stock, and that means an improvement of the land. Still feed may be so high and stock so low that it will not pay.

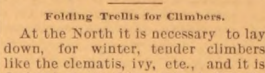
A Creamer.
One costing much less than a \$15 patent one may be made at home and give such comfort to a family that it will seem indispensable if once used. Take a store box 25 inches high, 27 inches wide and 30 inches long, set it in another large enough to allow 1 or 2 inches of air between the two; inside of this fit a zinc box; this is large enough to hold sufficient water and ice for four 18-quart milk cans (diameter 9 to 11 inches) and a number of self-sealing fruit jars filled at different times with butter, yeast, castard, fresh fruits, in fact, anything that it is desirable to keep at 10 degrees above freezing, through the summer. By tying a small cord around the jars and fastening the other end above water, there is no difficulty in bringing them to the surface when wanted. Two strips can be nailed along the bottom to slip cans under so the water will not raise them; on these strips can be set pans of milk that the cans may not hold or stones can be used to weight the cans down and dispense with the strips. Let those who delight in cold drinks and desserts in harvest time try an ice house and creamer.—M. H. Carpenter, in Practical Farmer.



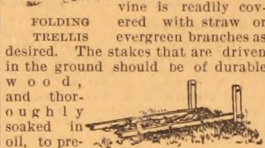
Small and Large Fruits. Prompt, energetic action applied at the right time, is far more essential with the small fruits than the large ones. An apple or pear tree will struggle along and often successfully against weeds, drouth and unsuitable soil, while a strawberry or raspberry would perish in a short time under similar circumstances. The public taste has not as yet been sufficiently cultivated to seek the variety of fruit, and it is doubtful if the masses appreciate or care whether a fruit is up to any particular standard of quality that scientific horticulturists have endeavored to establish. Quantity and cheapness is evidently more highly prized than quality, especially if the latter is attended by scarcity.

Save Labor.
With the amount of work that is always required upon the farm, there should be an effort made to save labor by every means possible when it can be done without too great an expenditure of money. In planting corn, for instance, instead of resorting to hand labor, as is very frequently the case, make use of the planter. This may be done by applying manure during the preparation of the soil, and if special fertilizers are to be used, employ a planter that will drop both that and the grain at the same time. Planting with a machine is more satisfactory than hand planting for the reason that the depth of covering being more uniform, the corn is quite likely to come up uniform. The same may also be said regarding the planting of potatoes; machines that cut, drop and cover at one operation work quite satisfactorily, and the saving of strength and time is an adequate return for the expenditure necessary.

Folding Trellis for Climbers.
At the North it is necessary to lay down, for winter, tender climbers like the clematis, ivy, etc., and it is desirable to do this without detaching them from the trellis which supports them. In our first illustration, is shown the lower portion of a folding trellis, and in the second the same is shown folded down for winter, in which position the vine is readily covered over with straw or evergreen branches as desired. The stakes that are driven in the ground should be of durable wood, and thoroughly soaked in oil, to prevent decay. They should be laid down for winter, above ground at least one foot. The lower hinges may be bolts, while the upper pins or stay should extend across the trellis, as seen. It may thus be used for, and will act as a support to the vines, and when removed will allow them to be bent over without pressing, at right angles. —Agriculturist.



A Neat Nest-Box.
A cheese-box with a square entrance cut in the side makes a convenient nest-box for either a laying or sitting hen. Convenient, because it can be moved easily and hides the hen.



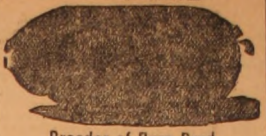
In the Poultry-Yard.
Breeding birds should be kept in good condition. Less pork and more chicken eating would give us less dyspeptics. Sand does not make a good substitute for gravel in the poultry-yard. Look for the white cap on the manure droppings as it signifies health. Fowls shedding their feathers should be fed a little sulphur in their soft feed. Boxes are valuable for poultry chiefly for the phosphate of lime they contain. One advantage with ducks is that after they begin laying they usually lay very regularly every day.

It is not wise to kill a fowl for the table that has been running at large until wanted. In all cases they should be cooped up for about ten days and fed on pure food. The fattening pen should have a slatted floor so that the droppings will fall beyond the reach of the birds. It is not uncommon for birds in confinement to eat their own droppings.

The Poultry News rightly says: "In nine homes out of ten, pork and beef would go to begging if it were fat, were they made into a pot-pie, or nicely roasted or manufactured into one of those rich, juicy chicken pies." For Those Who Cook. BREAKFAST CAKES.—Four and a half teacupfuls of flour, two teacupfuls of milk, one-half teacupful of sugar, one egg, one tablespoonful butter, one teaspoonful soda, two teaspoonfuls cream tartar and a little salt. Bake twenty minutes. CANNED RHUBARB.—Peel the rhubarb, and cut into three-quarter-inch lengths. Weigh, and to every pound allow half a pound of sugar. Make a syrup of half a pint of water to two pounds of sugar, let it boil and skim. Put in the rhubarb and boil fast five minutes. Put into jars and seal. STRAWBERRIES WITH WHIPPED CREAM.—Stem ripe strawberries, cover a layer in a glass dish, cover with pulverized sugar, and put another layer of berries and sugar. Cover the top with a pint of thick cream, the whites of two eggs and a teaspoon of sugar, whipped together. Set on ice until chilled.

STRAWBERRY TAPIOCA.—Wash a cup of berries, cover with cold water and soak over night. In the morning put on the fire with a pint of boiling water and let simmer until clear. Stew a quart of strawberries and stir in the boiling tapioca, sweeten to taste. Take from the fire, pour in a dish and stand aside to cool. Serve very cold, with cream.

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