

Broccoli Crop Wealth Producer

By FOSTER BUTNER

In the valleys of the Umpqua a wide variety of crops, some of them brought from other sections of the state as much as publicity as the broccoli. This may be accounted for in several ways; the superior quality of the product, the steady in-

crease in acreage and the production of so delicate a crop as cauliflower in a latitude where snow, ice and low temperatures would be expected. And each phase of this publicity is an asset to the community; the increasing crops bring in cash at a period when it is usually

most needed, creating a constant increase in production, the fine quality of the product bringing cash buyers into our midst and, without doubt many homeseekers are attracted here because the production of cauliflower in midwinter is the best possible proof of a mild winter climate.

In the beginning, seed beds were not sown until May. But it has been found that early plants are an advantage, so that it is now the custom to sow seed in April. Care should be taken in selecting this seed bed. It should be well-drained, sandy loam river bottom soil, naturally moist or provided with irrigation. It should not be over-rich. In fact, so far as fertility is concerned, seed-bed soil should be less fertile than that of the field where the crop is to be grown. This bed should be well plowed, harrowed and smoothed down. Seed should be sown with a hand-drill, with rows twelve to eighteen inches apart. Good plants may be produced fifteen to the inch if given close attention and thinned just as ready—where this is not possible it is better to sow thinner, say ten or twelve to the foot. It is well to test the seed on a strip of cloth before actual seeding. Field requirements are similar to those of seed bed. The majority of the broccoli growers keep their harrows going over the field while the plants are growing. When the plants become eight to ten inches high and stocky it is time to start setting. Some growers use the horse drawn setters and others prefer the hand machines. Regardless of which method is used, the essentials are sufficient moisture to sustain the plant until it takes root, pressing the earth tightly to the roots, taking pains to go over the field immediately following the setting and replace all that have died, filling in all skips. Rows should be three feet apart as this allows the standard field cars to straddle two rows, the horse walking between them. When plants are set by hand it is an advantage to check the field three feet each way as this permits cross cultivation. With the horse machines, plants are usually spaced about 28 or 30 inches in the row.

Cultivation should begin as soon as the plants are set and continued at frequent intervals until the rainy season—usually October. The early winter months are used in making crates, repairing field carts, packing sheds and other details connected with the harvest.

One of the most important items in connection with the harvest is the proper stage of maturity. My rule is to cut the head immediately the inner leaves unfurl sufficiently to expose the head—provided the head is of sufficient size to market, that is, large enough to pack 8 to 12 heads to the crate. When the head shows up before attaining this size it may be covered by breaking off, or bending over, some of the outer foliage and covering the head. Never use yellow or decayed leaves

for this purpose as they will discolor the head.

It is the custom to make two grades of the broccoli, Fancy and Choice. The former being solid, white heads and the latter all such heads as do not quite come up to the highest standards, yet are not ricey, yellowed or decayed. The heads should be graded and packed at one operation as the crop is bulky to handle and such handling is likely to injure the heads. In cutting in the field care should be taken to cut squarely across the stalk close up under the head, leaving enough leaves to protect the head. No further trimmings or cutting is necessary until the heads are packed into the crate, then using the top of the crate as a guide, cut off all foliage extending above the top. This leaves a neat looking job and each head is securely wrapped, protecting it from injury. Tight packing is of great importance. A good test is to invert the crate before nailing on the top—if it is properly packed none of the heads will fall out, even if the crate is shaken lightly. In the grading and packing each grower must remember that his name will go on each package and so grade and pack his crop that the grade may be relied upon by both his selling agents and the buyer. Whenever doubt arises in the packer's mind as to whether a head is Fancy or Choice, it should go in the Choice. Fancy must mean something, so that all heads in this grade must be perfect—"without doubt." In view of the many compliments passed upon Umpqua Valley Broccoli by numerous purchasers in various markets, it is evident that our growers are conscientious in grading and packing their broccoli. Nothing will kill a fruit or vegetable industry quicker than dishonest methods in grading and packing. The grower practicing such methods fools nobody but himself; he may deceive the buyer the first time but eventually he will find himself without a market for his crop.

All carlot shipments are made under refrigeration. In addition to the ice used in the bunkers provided in the car, it has been found advantageous to use inside the car proper, that is, between and over the crates of broccoli. In using this method, the crates are inverted in order to prevent the water from coming in contact with the curds. Several tons of ice are used in each car and this maintains a much lower temperature than would be possible without the ice.

Formerly it was the custom for the growers to arrange with Eastern distributing houses to handle their crops on a consignment basis, but the majority of the growers look with favor upon the plan of selling upon a cash f. o. b. basis. The result has been that numerous buyers have become interested in the crop and either come or send their representatives here during the season. This is a great advantage to the grower, as it not only eliminates the risk encountered in shipping to Eastern markets but also gives him his cash much more quickly. Some of the biggest produce houses in the country had their buyers in Roseburg last season, and present correspondence indicates that these buyers, in addition to some new recruits, will be with us again during the coming season.

Shipments for the season of 1922 amounted to about 110 cars, in addition to express shipments. The present acreage is considerably larger than last season so that the present estimate, based upon normal weather conditions, is 150 to 200 carloads.

While the greater portion of the crop is shipped from Roseburg, other localities are having great success. Riddle, Dillard, Edenbower and Dixonville sections are all producers of fine crops.

LETTUCE GROWING
In order to test this lettuce business, it is necessary to ship in carlots. Carlot shipments will require a total production of about ten acres. Desiring to test this matter, I will attempt to produce the plants under glass at a nominal rate, provided there are sufficient growers to make up the ten acres. While I am willing to try an acre or more myself, my advice to growers without previous experience, is to try about one-half an acre. It would be my aim to market the crop along the same lines pursued with the Broccoli crop. I am not presenting this as a sure thing, nor a get-rich quick proposition. However, it appears to me as having great possibilities, otherwise, this letter would be an imposition upon the Editor and his readers. It is up to you, Mr. Farmer, are you willing to risk a small amount of cash, considerable painstaking labor, and the use of a small plot of land for about 2 months? If the attempt is to be made this season preparations must begin at once. If you are interested let's talk it over.

BANISH THAT STRAW MAN

Supposing you thought you had been able to ward off all bad luck during the coming year by merely throwing a straw image out of your house on the last day of December. You would have thrown out not only one image, but a dozen. And supposing that with the discarding of the straw effigy you had thrown away all your sins. This is what the people of far-away Korea believe. On the day before New Year's the wise and far-seeing head of each family carefully makes a rough image of straw, which, with great ceremony, is taken to the door and thrown away with all the vigor a man would exert when he threw away ill fortune.

NEW YEAR OF ANCIENTS

The ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians and Persians began their new year at the autumnal solstice (September 21) and the Greeks, until the Fifth century, B. C., began the year at the winter solstice (December 21). In 432 B. C., the Greeks changed the festival to June 21, the beginning of summer.

IF IT'S

PHOTOGRAPHY

SEE



KOHLHAGEN BUILDING—UPSTAIRS

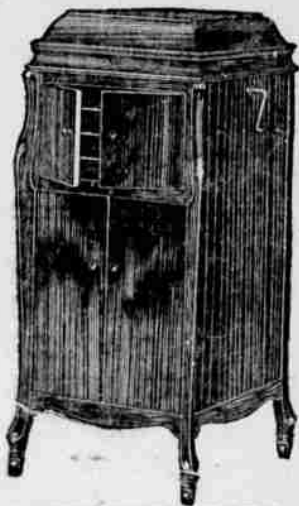
New Year's Greetings

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