

United States Department of Agriculture Special Page

Bulletins and Special Articles Issued by the Government, of Interest to the Northwest;
Suggestions Covering a Wide Range of Activities; Results of Federal Investigations, Etc.

Horticultural Board Bars Out Many Pests

IN its annual report for the year ending June 30, 1914, the Federal Horticultural Board calls especial attention to the great value of the crops which would be affected if infested Egyptian cotton seed or diseased potatoes should find their way into this country.

In the case of several small shipments of Egyptian cotton seed the Department discovered the presence of the pink boll worm, which at the present time is doing more damage in Egypt than all the other cotton pests combined. These shipments of seed were at once destroyed.

This, however, does not do away with the danger that infested seed might be obtained in shipments of baled cotton, which would thus disseminate the insect in this country. Public hearings have been held in order to discuss regulations for the use of foreign cotton by mills situated in cotton-growing regions in America. No definite action has as yet, however, been taken, because of the possibility that some way may be found of treating baled cotton so as to destroy all insect life. In the meantime, practically every mill which uses Egyptian cotton has agreed to burn at the end of each day all picker waste and seeds.

The danger from imported potatoes lies in the prevalence of powdery scab abroad. On this account no stock is accepted from Europe outside of Denmark and the Netherlands, and even in these countries the Island of Bornholm and the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe are excepted.

Other dangerous pests discovered in importations of various kinds include 14 instances of brown tail moth, two of egg masses of the gypsy moth, specimens of the olive fruit fly, and the citrus leaf miner. All these destructive pests were intercepted as a result of state and Federal inspection.

New quarantines were declared against the Mediterranean fruit fly and melon fly, prohibiting the shipment of certain fruits, nuts and vegetables from the Hawaiian Islands, and against certain portions of Maine on account of the existence of potato powdery scab. Living sugar canes or cuttings thereof coming from Hawaii and Porto Rico are also barred under the so-called sugar cane quarantine. Seeds of the avocado or alligator pear are also not allowed to be imported from Mexico and Central America.

Hints for Town-Dweller on Care of Window-Boxes

POTTED plants, sunk in a boxful of moss, can be used, or else the flowers and vines can be planted directly in the soil. If the moss-filled box is used the plants can be changed from time to time without much trouble, but possibly they do better when they are rooted in the soil of the box.

A metal box is suitable for holding the moss, but wood makes the best box in which flowers are to be planted directly. Cypress, authorities say, is the best wood, and although it costs a little more to begin with it outlasts any other kind.

The soil should be very rich—the smaller the box the richer the soil must be. The bottom of the box should be punctured with inch-wide holes in several places, and bits of broken flower pots should be so arranged over these holes as to make good drainage sure. Rich soil can be bought from a florist or it can be brought from the woods in bags or boxes. Wood soil should generally be mixed with sand for use in winter boxes.

HOW TO INCREASE THE EGG YIELD NOW.

Many breeders have made conditions ideal for their layers and have seemingly done everything possible to have the hens laying at full capacity and still are not getting enough eggs to pay the feed. Under these conditions Lice-O has been doing wonders. A tube large enough to last the average breeder a year is sold for 50c postpaid, guaranteed to give absolute satisfaction, or money refunded and no questions asked. This wonderful treatment has been on the market nearly a year and has never failed in a single instance. Circulars free. The Lice-O Co., 236½ Washington street, Portland, Or.

Meat Inspection Laws Greatly Strengthened

THE Supreme Court of the United States has recently handed down decisions of great importance in the enforcement of the meat inspection and livestock quarantine laws. The meat inspection law provides for the inspection of meat and meat food products before they enter interstate commerce. Among the provisions of this act is one which prohibits anyone from unlawfully destroying or altering marks or other identification devices which are required to be placed upon the meat or the containers.

Some parties in Kansas City, Kan., broke a Government seal on a car of meat and the lower court held that the meat inspection act related alone to those engaged in the business of preparing meats for transportation.

The Supreme Court reversed this decision and held, in substance, that the provision regarding identification devices applies to every person, firm, or corporation, or officer, agent, or employe thereof, no matter whether engaged in the interstate transportation of the meats or not. This decision will materially aid the Government in the strict enforcement of the law.

The livestock quarantine law prohibits the interstate movement of livestock from any territory quarantined by the Secretary of Agriculture, except under certain conditions prescribed by him. The District Court at Kansas City, Mo., in the case of United States vs. Nixon et al., construed the act not to apply to receivers of railroad companies, for the reason that they were not mentioned in the statute.

The Supreme Court reversed this decision and held that the amendment to the original act was intended to make the remedy as broad as the evil which was sought to be cured, and that the law, as amended, applied to any common carrier engaged in the interstate transportation of livestock. This decision is regarded of great importance in the enforcement of the law enacted for the protection of the livestock interests of the country.

"Tacked-Down Carpet Habit" Bad

THE tacked-down carpet habit is a bad one from more than one point of view," says the United States Department of Agriculture's entomologist, and the Buffalo moth (or carpet beetle) is only one household pest that thrives under this securely-fastened floor covering. In Southern States this insect is of no importance as a household nuisance. One reason for this is probably that rugs or movable squares of carpet or matting are more generally used in this section.

The housekeeper of the North, eager to be rid of this pest, might well adopt the rug or square of carpet, which may readily be rolled up and examined at all times and treated if found necessary. This really seems the most effective way of combating the Buffalo moth. If the floors are not suitable for polishing, straw matting laid under the loose carpet squares will make an attractive appearance, and while not as clean as the bare floor, will afford fewer places for the insect than the tacked-down carpet.

Fumigation Measures.

Such housekeepers as prefer to keep their carpets fastened over the entire floor along with the attendant inconveniences must use more strenuous measures to be rid of the carpet beetle. Thorough fumigation with bisulphid of carbon or sulphur dioxide is the best measure.

If bisulphid of carbon is used great care must be taken that there is no fire in the house when the fumigation is in progress, as the gas is very inflammable. The vapor should not be inhaled. The burning of sulphur (sulphur dioxide with some sulphur trioxide), which can be obtained at any drugstore in the form of candles, has been effectively used for many years to destroy other insect pests, as the bedbug, and will also kill the Buffalo moth if the fumigation is thorough.

Two pounds of stick sulphur have proved sufficient for every thousand cubic feet of space. The chief objection to sulphur fumigation arises from the strong bleaching action of

Insect Pests Receive Commercial Attention

THERE has been a notable increase in the number and quantity of insecticidal and fungicidal preparations on the market, according to the annual report of the United States Department of Agriculture's insecticide and fungicide board. However, there also seems a more general desire on the part of the manufacturers to comply with the provisions of the law and the Department has made every endeavor to assist manufacturers in this respect by furnishing them scientific information.

For this purpose the board has been issuing a monthly publication since last February, in which are printed extracts from letters written to individuals by the board. These opinions, it is considered, should be of service to others and aid the public in a better understanding of the law's requirements.

A general outline of the procedure of the board is given in the new report. Besides the administrative work necessary to enforce the act, there are examinations of the various preparations and tests to determine their strength and efficacy.

Materials and proprietary preparations used for agricultural spraying purposes are examined, as are products used to rid the household, garden, etc., of insects of all kinds, garden insects, germicides, etc., which are claimed to be efficacious to kill or combat bacteria, preparations used on horses, cattle, sheep, swine or goats, as well as on fowls and other domesticated animals.

Besides testing an insecticide or fungicide to determine its power to kill insects, tests are also made to determine whether the preparation will injure the vegetation on which it is sprayed.

One duty of the board is to keep imported adulterated and misbranded preparations from entering the country. Of 147 official and unofficial samples received during the year from abroad, it was recommended that 62 be denied entry until they should conform to the law.

the fumes in the presence of moisture and their powerful destructive action on vegetation.

Thorough and Continued.

Not only must measures be thorough, but they must be long-continued for the housekeeper whose house has been chosen as an abode by the Buffalo moth. The "annual house-cleaning" is not enough in this instance. If circumstances permit of but one it should be undertaken in midsummer, but two are really needed.

In making thorough housecleanings the rooms should be attended to one at a time. The carpets should be taken up, thoroughly beaten and sprayed out of doors with benzine and allowed to air for several hours. The rooms themselves should be thoroughly swept and dusted, the floors washed down with hot water, the cracks carefully cleaned out and kerosene or benzine poured into the cracks and sprayed under the baseboards. The extreme inflammability of benzine, and even of its vapor, when confined, should be remembered and fire carefully guarded against.

Filling Cracks.

Where the floors are poorly constructed and the cracks are wide it will be a good idea to fill the cracks with plaster of paris in a liquid state; this will afterwards set and lessen the number of harboring places for the insect.

Before relaying the carpet, tarred roofing paper should be laid upon the floor, at least around the edges, but preferably over the entire surface, and when the carpet is relaid it will be well to tack it down rather lightly so that it can be occasionally lifted at the edges and examined for the presence of the insect.

Later in the season, if such an examination shows the insect to have made its appearance, a good though somewhat laborious remedy consists in laying a damp cloth over the suspected spot of the carpet and ironing it with a hot iron. The steam thus generated will pass through the carpet and kill the insects immediately beneath it.

Handling of the Alfalfa Hay Crop

THE cutting of alfalfa should be done when not more than one-half the plants have blossomed.

At this stage the yield for the season will be greater than if cut earlier, therefore more feed will be secured.

Late cutting of the first crop injures the plant and the increased yield from succeeding crops will not make up for the loss of the first crop.

The leaves of alfalfa contain much more feeding value than the stems, and every effort should be made to save the leaves.

When the ground and weather are dry it will cure readily and is safe to rake within a few hours after mowing, and stack a few hours after raking.

When alfalfa is very rank and succulent and the weather is damp it is not a great task to dry the leaves, but the stems will be wet.

Always have the hay dry enough before stacking that when a handful of stems is twisted together no water can be squeezed out. The first crop is usually the hardest to cure.

Mow early in the morning, after the dew is off, allowing the sun to wilt the swath. Then rake and put it in narrow tall cocks before night.

The next morning, after the dew is off, open the cocks, but do not abate the leaves; the following afternoon the hay will usually be in shape to stack.

Of course you will sometimes be governed by weather conditions, but when the weather is fair this is a very satisfactory method to follow.

No Excuse for Stumps— The Champion Idlers

SOMEBODY said that if a man could work at the full height of his power for at least one hour each day you would be amazed at what he had accomplished during the year.

Every farmer knows how much better he could do if there was nothing idle on his land, and if he could use his own hours to the best ends, but the champion idlers of the world are the stumps.

There is plenty of excuse for almost any kind of a tree on the farm, but there is no excuse at all for stumps. A stump is producing nothing, and more than that, it is keeping out of cultivation what may be the best land on the farm. In addition to this, like most idlers, the stump is constantly in the way. Every time you want to cultivate your fields you have to go 'round the stumps, tiring the horses and yourself.

Now, the reason there are so many stumps left on farms that have been cultivated a long time is that where there are only a few stumps left it hardly seems worth while to go to the great labor necessary to take them out. Most anybody can sit down and figure where it will be unprofitable this year to take the time and expend the energy necessary to get all the fields clear.

But this is poor figuring. The expense of taking out the stumps should not be spread over one year's operation, but over 10 or 15 years' operation, because the average hard wood stump now left in your fields will still be there 10 or 15 years from now unless it is taken out.

And as against the cost of the operation of removing it you should figure the increased facility with which you may work in the fields and the productiveness of the land on which the stump stands, not for one year, but for 15 years.

Figuring in this way the labor of taking out the stumps is the most profitable labor you could do.

And with the modern highly-improved stump pullers now in the market it is possible not only to snatch out your own stumps at a profit to yourself in the long run, but also to make a profit out of the puller even during the first year.

If you have stumps your neighbors have stumps also, and many of our subscribers have not only cleared their own field, but have made money out of their puller during the first year by clearing up the fields of their neighbors.

Is the cow you have purchased shrinking in her milk flow? It is from homesickness, no doubt. Poor thing feels like a cat in a strange garret. Pet her and give her all the little treats you can.