

Asparagus of Excellent Quality Grown in Willamette Valley

River Bottom Land Required

Fiala Vineyards Have 27 Acres; Difficulty of Production Noted

C. GENEVIEVE MORGAN
Though California has far and away the monopoly of asparagus production in this country—in 1936 that state grew 90,706 tons of asparagus on 67,360 acres of land, and of the tonnage 31,596 went to market and 59,110 went into cans—"grass" of excellent quality is grown within a figurative stone's throw from Salem.

Veteran local growers and second oldest in the Willamette valley are the Fialas, whose asparagus comes to town and in fact to most of the valley towns, under the Fiala Vineyards label. A. J. Fiala directs the labors on the 27-acre plantings in the river bottom gardens along the Willamette across from Salem. You get to the vineyards by turning at the "sand and gravel" high along the Wallace road.

The vineyards, by the way, have gradually come the way of overproduction until the grapes, once the only commercial plantings in the Willamette valley, are represented now by but two short arbors on the farm. Last of the commercial plantings were taken out a year or two ago.

Not Recommended
And although Fiala planted his first five acres of asparagus 14 years ago (a short time after the valley pioneer plantings by Settlemier at Woodburn), he is still not enthusiastic about having "grass" as a crop for planting in the valley.

Reasons? Probably fourfold: It will grow in only the very best land; production is expensive; it takes several years to bring asparagus into real production; and lastly, the bugaboo of overproduction.

On the latter score, Fiala points out that seven or eight years ago, "grass" brought \$1.75 per dozen, to the \$1 it brings at top now—and back some years beyond that it was worth as high as \$2.40 a dozen bunches wholesale. Same idea as grapes: They brought 10 to 12 cents a pound in early days of the Fiala vineyard; a cent a pound before the grapes were grubbed out.

Need River Bottom
Fiala points out that river bottom land only is suitable for growing asparagus hereabouts; attempts to grow it on hill land have proved disheartening in spite of the fact that the crop will make some slight showing the first year. Fiala asparagus is all of the Mary Washington variety.

As may be gathered, the Fialas are independent growers, finding their own market which is to the Salem commission houses largely. Practically all other plantings, with three or four exceptions, in the valley are under contract to the Reid Murdoch and company cannery in Salem. This cannery is the only local one packing asparagus, and has plantings on several hundred acres in the valley stretching as far south as Harrisburg.

Asparagus crowns are planted 10 to 12 inches deep and set from 14 to 15 inches—or even up to three to four feet—apart and the crowns spread gradually until some become so large that the average person can hardly stretch his arms about them. But

Film Star Caught by Hotel Strike



Forced to carry his own bags and climb several flights of stairs to his room in a San Francisco hotel where service employees went on strike, Oliver Hardy, somewhat corpulent movie comedian, found the going rather strenuous and pained to wipe the perspiration from his brow, above.

that circumference takes years. Incidentally, at 25 years the crowns bear just as succulent asparagus as in early life.

With such crown development, cleaning an older yard becomes a problem.

Beetles Menace
But the greatest problem of all the valley asparagus grower faces is beetles. The best solution to date is chickens.

So Fiala has 700 roosters running on his asparagus acreage. They get the beetles, which attack the stalk and make swift inroads into the crop unless stopped. Fiala puts the chickens on as soon as the beetle shows up, usually about cutting time, and keeps them on until harvest is over for the season. That means for a period of two and one-half months, normally. The cutting season begins April 1 in a normal year, though this year Fiala cut the first grass April 20, and is ended the middle of June.

The flock of roosters is sold at the end of the cutting season, and contrary to what one might expect, Fiala says there is not profit but rather loss in this angle. Fiala gave no figures on production from his fields, for this depends upon weather conditions and is also hard to determine for any period because of various ages of the plantings. Some days 100 dozen bunches of grass are cut; often more or less. Asparagus when it reaches full growing stage will run well over a ton to the acre.

Needs Moderate Weather
The ideal growing weather is the average spring day—not too hot, not too cold. Two or three cold days will make the ground so cold the shoots won't come like they should. Conversely, hot days will send the stalks up so fast that two cuttings a day instead of one are necessary. And that isn't appreciated. Anything but ideal growing weather makes for spready heads, and though these may taste just as good it takes more of them to make a pound.

Expenses attached to asparagus growing are heavy, Fiala says, and cites necessity to place 600 to 700 pounds of commercial fertilizer on every acre each season, labor costs, crates, labels and other incidentals to marketing.

During the growing season, the entire 27 acres—including the less productive five-acre patch planted last year—is cut once a day every day; yes, Sundays too. Fiala employs 10 to 11 field hands at this time.

4-H'ers, Parents Guests at Supper

Lois Miller, Arthur Harris Scholarship Winners at Jefferson

JEFFERSON, May 15—A 7 o'clock chicken-plate supper was given at the schoolhouse Thursday night for members of the 4-H club and their parents. This program was presented: Piano solos, by Ruth and Betty Terhune and Mildred Thurston; readings by Lois Miller and Jean Mary Redmond. Gary Barnes and Earl Marcum gave a demonstration of wood work; and Arthur Harris gave a history of this year's 4-H club work.

Wayne Harding of Salem, county club leader, gave a talk on 4-H club work and the summer school; and also announced the winners of scholarships which were sponsored by the Home-School organization, and the Better Business club. The winners are Lois Miller and Arthur Harris, who will attend summer school at Corvallis.

Presents Music Pepis
Mrs. C. and their parents presented her music pupils in recital Tuesday night to a large audience.

Appearing on the program were Geraldine Costelow, John Kendall, Gene O'Hearn, David Cope land, Dolly Wiederkehr, Virginia Motley, June McDonald, Robert Dennison, Harry Holebeck, Evelyn Kendel, Jeannine Clodfelter, Robert Dennison, Norma and Marjorie Miller, Ella Hall, Madeline McDonald, Doris Motley, Irene Sprague, Evelyn Hall, Nina Marie McDonald, and Richard Kendall.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Benson and three children of Sioux City, Iowa, arrived here Wednesday and are visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jenness for a local home.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Fryrear and son, recently from Red Oak, Iowa, are moving into their new home in the south part of town, known as the Beckley place.

Mr. and Mrs. Y. M. McGill are the parents of a 3-pound son born Friday morning, May 14, at their home west of Jefferson.

Leonard Goetz of Jefferson and brother John Goetz of Albany left Monday for Pontiac, Mich. From there John Goetz will go to Buffalo, N.Y., on a visit. They will also visit in South Dakota.

Truman Robbins Leads Scholastic Race With Ruth Dornhecker Next

PIONEER, May 15—The members of the 8th grade have just finished the race for the class honors. Truman Robbins won first place with Ruth Dornhecker a close second and Fay Keller and Elmo Black following close.

The other two members of the eighth grade are Harold Brown and Odie Pelke. Mrs. Domaschofsky is planning a graduation exercise by all the school for Friday night, June 4.

The honor roll pupils for this month are James Coy, Margaret Wells, Dorothy Keller, Even Segelide, Betty Thompson, Robert Dornhecker, Elmo Black and Truman Robbins.

Party for Graduates Is Fairview School Event

FAIRVIEW, May 15—The seven teachers of the rural schools who have students included in the annual eighth grade graduation at a Hopewell gave a Chinese party at the Fairview schoolhouse Thursday night. There were 32 students present.

Mrs. J. W. Versteeg of Fairview, Mrs. Will Daren of Grand Island, Mrs. Harry Smith of Hopeville, J. M. Murphy of Pleasantdale, J. P. Doughty of Unionvale, Miss Ruth Duren of Wheatland and Miss Patsy McNeff of Yamp were the teachers who gave the party.

Mrs. DeJardin Is Auxiliary Leader

STAYTON, May 15.—Mrs. Gabe DeJardin was elected president Wednesday when the American Legion auxiliary held its regular meeting at the home of Mrs. James Say.

The other officers elected are Mrs. Oscar Hagen, first vice-president; Mrs. Claude Knight, second vice president; Mrs. Maron Hunt, secretary-treasurer; Mrs. Joe Pieser, sergeant-at-arms; Mrs. V. R. Tuel, chaplain; Mrs. Earl Allen, historian.

Plans were made for the poppy drive and several candidates for the 4-H club scholarship were discussed. Announcement of the winner will be made later.

Brush College Helpers Entertain Mission Group From Spring Valley Area

BRUSH COLLEGE, May 15.—One of the most enjoyable meetings of the year for the Brush College Helpers was that of Thursday when the group entertained the Spring Valley Home Missionary society at the home of Mrs. Charles McCarter. Mrs. Carl Harritt was in charge of devotions, assisted by Mrs. F. E. Wilson. Mrs. Marie Flint McCall gave an interesting travelogue of her trip to Mexico.

Mrs. Wayne D. Henry, president of the Spring Valley society, was awarded first prize in the four-subject conversation contest. Her subject was "What You Would Do if You Were Wallis Wartfield."

Bragg's Father Dies

SILVERTON, May 15.—Mr. and Mrs. Faye Bragg and son, Collin, were called to Talent Wednesday by the sudden death of Mr. Bragg's father, I. O. Bragg, who suffered a heart attack.

Mother-Daughter Banquet Enjoyed

SILVERTON, May 15.—Mrs. C. F. Schoemaker of Salem was guest speaker at the mother and daughter banquet at the Christian church Thursday night. About 100 attended.

Other program numbers included short talks by Mrs. J. W. Jordan, representing mothers; Miss Edna Plank, as a daughter; vocal selection by a quartet composed of Neva and Thelma Donnell, Ilene Rahn and Bernice Gay; reading, Mary McCall.

Minnie Bissell Is Head Rural Club

WOODBURN, May 15.—Annual election of officers was held at the regular meeting of the Woodburn Rural club at the home of Mrs. James Hart Wednesday afternoon. Mrs. Minnie Bissell was elected president; Mrs. Floyd Dyer, vice-president; Mrs. Alma Timm, secretary; Mrs. Leila Hughes, assistant secretary; Mrs. Lizzie Coleman, treasurer; Mrs. Naomi Mattson, press correspondent.

The following standing committees for the year were named: Membership, Miss Elizabeth Polard and Mrs. Adrian Jacobs; relief, Mrs. H. Haroldson and Mrs. Dyer; flowers, Mrs. Alma Timm and Mrs. Emma Eldwell; arrangements, Mrs. Arthur Rerrick, Mrs. F. P. Brouhard.

Mrs. Bissell reported on the relief work done by the club during the year, stating that 235 garments had been given to the needy, also other apparel and foods. Plans were made for the annual picnic to be held at Oak park June 7, with a 7 o'clock supper for all members and their families. This was the final meeting of the club year. The first fall meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Adrian Jacobs September 8.

Achievement Day Event at Illihee

ILLIHEE, May 15.—The 4-H club achievement day was held at Illihee school Friday afternoon with a large number of parents and friends attending to see the displays of school work, along with division one sewing and health work.

A program was presented by the members under the direction of their health club leader, Miss Nea Edgar, and Mrs. Barnes, sewing club leader. Refreshments were served later.

Healds of health buttons were awarded to the pupils who had met the requirements. Graduation exercises for the one eighth grade pupil, Imogene Dake, of Illihee school will be held in combination with the Sunnyside graduation, Thursday night, May 20, at 8 o'clock, at Sunnyside.

In the recent county spelling test the sixth and eighth grades of Illihee were ranked among the first in the county. The pupils were Betty Fellet, sixth grade; Imogene Dake, eighth grade.

JESSIE—7 valley
MILL CITY, May 15.—Mrs. Jessie Pendleton has accepted the position as principal of the Mill City grade school. Mrs. Pendleton was formerly Miss Jessie Trask of Lyons and has many friends in this community.

The annual play of the Mill City high school was given in Babb's hall Wednesday and Thursday nights. A large crowd was in attendance both evenings. The play entitled "The Saturday Evening Ghost" was the best that has been put in recently by the high school.

Members of the cast, which was changed in several characters for the second performance so that more students participated, included Ben Paddock, Joanne Crabtree, Lois Fleetwood, Nancy Jane Faust, Hoyt Bethel, Collis Heath, Helen Bodeker, Constance Bodeker, Roy Moore, Carl Kelly, Edna Swift, Dorothy Perry, Miss Ethel Hickey was the director, assisted by Miss Fletcher.

After the play the cast and

Mother's Circle Meets

GRAND ISLAND, May 15.—The Mother's Circle club held its

last business meeting for the spring Wednesday afternoon at the home of Mrs. J. H. Tompkins with 19 members and two guests, Mrs. Sarah Tompkins of Cutler City and Mrs. George Antrim of the Unionvale district present. The club voted to join the county federation of clubs.

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