

WINTER ORCHARD WORK.

It is a common practice for creamery patrons who own cow separators to deliver their cream but two or three times a week, says New England Homestead. Creameries which are run on the cream gathering system often collect no more frequently. The cream which accumulates is often kept without suitable attempts being made to cool it, and it becomes more or less sour. Cream which sours on the hands of the producer is less apt to make a good quality of butter than that which is delivered at the factory in sweet condition. This is largely owing to the uneven sourness or acidity of different lots of cream and to the manner in which they were ripened or soured.

The producer, however, frequently argues that it makes no particular difference to his pocketbook whether the cream sours or not. According to the Vermont experiment station, there is a chance that not only may the sour cream injure the entire lot of butter, but there is almost certain to be a direct financial loss to the dairyman in another way. It is difficult and almost impossible to obtain an accurate sample of sour cream, and the creamery which receives it has great difficulty in making a proper test. Gas bubbles are at the bottom of the trouble.

In nine cases out of ten the error in sampling will be in the direction of giving a lower result. In other words, a creamery patron who sells his cream in a sweet condition will get a larger check than the one who sells sour cream, even though the quantities of each are the same and the two creams were of the same quality or contained the same amount of butter fat in the beginning. The chances are always in favor of an inaccurate test. Rather than urge creameries to make any special efforts to test sour cream properly the energy in this direction should be expended in securing the cream in a sweet condition. No creamery ought to receive sour cream. If creamery patrons cannot see how much it is to their interests as well as to the interests of the creamery to keep the cream sweet, an indirect loss may be laid upon them in this way by giving them the low test which sour cream is likely to receive.

Is It True?

Professor C. D. Smith, director of the Michigan experimental station, states that it is his judgment that "a cow yields as rich milk as a heifer as she will as a mature cow."

What is the opinion of our readers on this question? asks Hoard's Dairyman. Does the cow give as rich milk in her first nursing term as when she has become mature?

We confess to a strong leaning toward the idea that if a heifer is to become a good one she will give evidence of that fact usually in her first term.

Frequent Tests.

John Albright in an address before the New York Dairywomen's association said:

Test and weigh the milk of each cow for three consecutive days of each month. Of course a composite sample is taken which will give the average test for the three days and will necessitate only one actual test. In making these tests it may soon be discovered that some of the herd are kept at an actual loss, while others are yielding a good profit. The manipulation of the test is so simple that with a little study every farmer can use it for his purpose with sufficient accuracy.

Hard to Keep Up Price.

Albany (N. Y.) milk dealers are having difficulty in maintaining the retail price at 8 cents per quart. The demand has fallen off somewhat on account of the increase of 2 cents, and some dealers, rather than carry their milk back home, have been cutting the price to 6 cents.

Skill in Milking.

Milking is an operation which requires skill, as it has an important effect on the amount and quality of milk given. Dairywomen know that there are great differences between milkers as between cows and that cows with good milkers do much better with good milkers than with others. Indeed, good cows are often almost ruined by poor milkers.

The milker should avoid handling the cow more than is necessary, and he should make it a rule to do his work quickly and thoroughly. He should never go from a sick to a well cow without first cleaning his hands. The habit of wetting his hands with milk is filthy in the extreme and should never be practiced. Some people think it necessary, but this is a mistake. The hands should be kept dry. If they are not, it is impossible to prevent drops of milk from constantly falling from them into the pail.

The pail should be held close to the udder, so as to expose the milk to the air as little as possible. The farther the streams fall from the more they spray the more dirt and bacteria they collect. Contamination from the fore milk must be avoided by discarding the first few streams drawn, or less than a gill in all. This entails little loss, as the first milk drawn is always poor in butter fat, and if it happens to be badly contaminated, as is frequently the case, much injury and trouble may be saved. —Farm, Field and Stockman.

Cleanliness the Prime Requisite.

A writer says, "The prime requisite in making good butter is cleanliness, which must begin as far back as the food for the cows; the water they drink, the air they breathe and the place they live in."

Fruit Notes.

Washington state had a great boom in apple tree planting the past fall. Sturtz, Van Donan, Centennial and Fretcher are standard varieties of the peach.

A collection of the choicest varieties of Egyptian dates is to be tested in the southwest.

Strawberries have become a great crop for Oregon, as they have for North Carolina and Florida.

Southern California olive growers have associated to promote the industry, to seek markets and maintain remunerative prices.

FRUIT & FLOWERS

PLANTS IN WINDOWS.

How to Keep Them Thrifty Under Various Conditions.

Plants must be treated as individuals. No two can be handled in exactly the same manner, unless Meacham's Monthly in presenting some points of successful plant culture in windows. We must first know the probable needs of our plants, then give regular care and exercise judgment in maintaining certain treatment or suspending it for something better suited to the immediate requirements.

The conditions of the soil in the pots is of first importance. Plants of a succulent nature or with fleshy roots will usually object to red heavy soil. Others may find unsuited conditions in an extremely light, porous soil. Where doubt enters the mind be safe and adopt a medium grade of soil, loamy and porous.

Naturally heavy soil is slow to yield up moisture as well as slow in taking it. Water poured on the surface of such fine soil penetrates and slow passage. The soil in the bottom of a pot will rarely get any moisture, though mostly needed there, unless it be given by standing it for a few moments in a saucer of water. Such soil becomes sodden and sour and will likely be overwatered in the upper part.

The extreme of this state—light, sandy soil—of course takes water at once, and it almost as quickly passes off. In a warm room the moisture will evaporate so quickly as to require watering twice a day and each time a thorough soaking. Medium light soil is seen to be the safest. Let it be just so that the water will enter at once and dampen the soil throughout the pot without running off.

Plants in jardinières sometimes suffer by having water standing in the latter—they are literally drowned. On the other hand, if the plant is growing, especially rapid growth, or flowering an abundance of water is required, and what would ordinarily be an overwatering is then of great benefit.

Light and air are of very great importance. Plants should have both every day, and this light must be distributed equably. This is accomplished by turning the plants around, exposing them to the light on all sides.

Some plants require more heat than others, especially when growing and receiving considerable water. Plants practically dormant may be kept cool and without much water and light.

But few persons realize what a small amount of soil is made to support a plant and how inadequate the nourishment must frequently be. Food of some kind should be occasionally added to the soil. Manure in liquid form will aid strong growth. A few drops of household ammonia frequently added to water is a good practice. Potash, present in wood ashes or bonemeal, will sometimes be acceptable.

Plants in a very hot room sometimes suffer from a dry atmosphere, and the leaves should be lightly syringed occasionally.

Drip or dying leaves on a plant are useless incumbrances and should be removed and destroyed as soon as they appear.

FRUIT & FLOWERS

WINTER ORCHARD WORK.

Pruning and Thinning—Cultivation. Preparations For Spring.

Pruning should be done in winter where it is necessary to prune away large limbs. The trees may need branches thinned out to give an abundance of light and air among the branches. They cannot have too much. A low spreading habit should be encouraged for exposure of as great a surface to the light as possible. If the trees are spreading close to each other, don't be afraid to cut out alternate ones where necessary. It will give additional value and longer life to the remaining ones.

Cultivating can be done to advantage in winter. Surface soil should be stirred and made fine to admit air and moisture readily in the growing season. Summer cultivation must necessarily be rather shallow for fear of disturbing the young feeding roots, which are rather near the surface. This danger is not present in winter, and it is a good time to break up the soil deeply. The surface may first have its coating of manure and then be turned lightly under. It need not be harrowed smooth. The rains and frost will do that for perfection.

When weather will not permit of outside work, get the spraying apparatus in order and the formulas ready for early work in spring. Get ahead of the codling moth. If you propose setting out more trees, plan it out on paper, deciding exactly what you will plant and what space each should have.

Large growing trees, like apples, are often given thirty-six feet squares. Other kinds are given less, down to eighteen feet. It is safest to err in giving them too much. The holes may even be dug and manure placed in them to become well incorporated with the soil. Spring planting is usually accompanied by considerable haste because of other work at that time, and it is advisable to be in readiness.—Mechan's Monthly.

Berry Crates Easily Carried.

Berry crates will be needed in the patch next spring, and the winter days are a good time to get them in readiness. An Ohio Farmer writes tells of an excellent way which one of his boys hit upon for making a basket crate convenient for two persons to carry. Few children can carry a basket of berries alone, yet two are enough to make good pickers can carry one very easily, but the trouble is to get hold of it. The solution of the difficulty is this: The dovetailed gift crate in general use has the end formed by two perpendicular pieces of veneer, as shown at A and B in the sketch. The boy carries a square crate, and the father carries the inside ends of heavy crates, and the inside upper corner of each piece, as shown by the dotted lines. About an inch and a half is cut from each, making hand holes a little less than four inches in width. This destroys the usefulness of the nail in the corners, but it is only the nail work of a moment to drive the nails with a claw hammer and drive them farther along. In carrying a full crate the four end boxes of the upper tier are put in a picking carrier, and the larger boy carries them in his other hand, while the lesser boy or girl carries the cover. For a short carry it is not necessary to remove either baskets or cover, but a backhanded grip is taken with the fingers crowded up against the boxes. Cutting the hand holes does not materially injure the crate unless the berries are to be shipped.

A Popular Orchid.

This beautiful orchid is one of the most useful for florists' use, being one of the first varieties available in autumn and its gorgeous branching panicles of golden flowers being exceedingly effective in decorative work. Sometimes as many as 100 to 200 flowers are borne on one spike, a remarkable product from so small a plant. It requires little room in a house, doing well in a basket suspended from the roof of the greenhouse, and can be grown in a comparatively cool place. It is now grown by the thousands in the neighborhood of New York.—Gardening.

Why the Pot Plant Doesn't Grow.

If pot plant growth is sluggish, do not add more water to the soil where water is not needed. Remember that all plants require but little water. To apply more than is taken up or evaporated is to make the soil less congenial to the plants.

Notes From Gardening.

The Star strain of petunias will be introduced the coming season. The pure white double althea appears to be a very useful flowering shrub.

Unless carnations are wanted for summer blooming it will be early enough to cut cuttings in January and February.

On toward spring an azalea may be brought into flower with very little forcing on account of nearing the natural flowering season.

The originators of the Timothy Eaton chrysanthemum have both pink and yellow sports said to be identical with that variety except as to color.

L. A. Beckmann says that in Georgia the "Elberta orange" is worse than ever and that every available tree of this variety has been planted this fall.

The cost of growing corn, cutting it and putting it in the silo has been variously reported at almost all figures from \$1 to \$3 per ton, says American Cultivator. We do not doubt but that it has been done for the smaller sum when the land has been made rich and well cultivated and the most modern improvements were at hand to do the work, but we think a fair average would be nearer double that with the ordinary farmer even in a favorable season. But there are not many who would like to grow roots for feeding to stock at that price. Certainly we know of none who would grow them to sell at that price, and few would care to grow them at \$4 per ton if they could grow other crops and find a ready cash market for them. As regards the value of them, an average of the various roots shows that the same amount of each fed with equal rations of hay and grain resulted a little in favor of the roots, but this was more than offset by the two facts that the roots cannot be kept in as good condition for late spring or summer feeding as can the ensilage and that there is more apt to be a crop failure from drought or other causes with the roots than with the corn. The droughts of the two past years have led many to believe that having ensilage to feed in the summer, when pastures are growing poorer, is of almost as much importance, and some say more, than having it in the winter.

What is the best style of silo is still a mooted question. The round stave silo has been very popular for several years largely because it is the cheapest form of silo that can be erected. When properly built and properly taken care of, it also seems to be fairly durable. Next in favor is the square or rectangular silo, with cut off corners. This makes an excellent silo. The remaining style is the round silo built wholly of stone and brick or with part stone and brick and above that a wooden structure with studding set in the wall and covered outside and inside with thin boards that will bend to a circle, with best quality of building paper between the boards. It goes without saying that a silo built of stone or brick or a combination of stone and brick will be more durable than any structure built of wood and in some places perhaps not more expensive.

A dairy farmer in Carlisle, Pa., with 200 cows does not like cowpens for food for his herd. He sowed two acres, and the yield was good, but the cows refused to eat them. He thinks they might do for southern cows that cannot get a square meal without taking a mountain walk of a mile or more. He cannot understand how well fed cows can be induced to eat them. But there are farmers who claim that both cows and horses eat them greedily and seem to prefer them to other food, says the American Cultivator. But, as all do not, and it seems to be an acquired taste, and as they are as difficult to cure as hay, we see no reason for urging a trial of them on northern farmers or those who can grow clover, which seems to suit the appetite of all our animals and which produces nearly if not quite as much food per acre as the cowpen and as much milk per ton of dry or green food as any crop grown. The Massachusetts experiment station has spent much time and some money in testing various fodder crops, but we think it has not yet found any better than the combination of corn fodder and clover, which seems to grow in almost any fertile soil to furnish food that all animals like and thrive on, whether green or dry cured, and that leave the land in as good if not better condition for future crops as any crops that have been tried.

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REV. DR. MORRIS WECHSLER, Rabbi of the Cong. Israel, Israel, New York, Jan. 3, 1901.

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