

AGRICULTURAL NEWS

THINGS PERTAINING TO THE FARM AND HOME.

After Producing Pine Fruit, Learn How to Sell it for the Most Money—Plymouth Rock Hens Have Many Points of Excellence—Brief Notes.

Fruit Growing.

An apple tree will nearly care for itself, but the man who wants good trees in the future will thin his fruit. If a tree bore one hundred apples I should remove fifty. If the next year it bore two hundred I should leave one hundred to ripen, and the next, if it had a thousand I should leave six hundred. This will get the tree into the habit of bearing. A peach tree that will set a thousand peaches needs to have six or seven hundred thinned off. Thus you will get more bushels to the tree. The more you throw away the more you will have, and you will practically get \$4 for \$1.

After producing fine fruit learn how to sell it for the most money. The fruit which brings most is that which is nearest, fullest and most honestly packed. Pick your fruit carefully and in the cool of the day. Pack in a cool place and in tight packages, for the less air that reaches the fruit the better. Then put the crates in a cool place. In packing your fruit, the finest first, then medium, etc. The three or four grades should be uniform throughout. Ask your dealers what kind of packages sell best. Next get a good dealer and tell him you have a good thing. Have your commission man go and see your place. The business side of fruit growing means belief in yourself and then making those with whom you trade believe in you. Finally, do not go into the business until you have thought it out and made up your mind that you will succeed.—Grange Homes.

Profitable Hens

In my operations in the poultry line I have never found any breed to possess so many points of excellence, with the ordinary treatment of the average farmer, as the Plymouth Rocks. They pay me. I have had a flock of forty Plymouth Rocks average me \$1.45 per hen for a year, with a country market for poultry and eggs. They had the run of the farm and barn, with an abundance of sour milk and such grains as the farm produced. This seemed to furnish all they desired, except grit, which was supplied in plaster scraped from the walls of an old house. Now, with a larger flock, I am feeding buckwheat mostly, raking it deep into chaff and straw, with bone and meat scraps obtained from butchers. The hens have plenty of warm water to drink, and they take lots of it, too. My hens are kept in what was once a hay bay, now fitted with windows and devoted to poultry. It is light, warm and roomy, joins the main barn floor by a sliding door, and the hens are let out a while each day and given the run of the entire barn, both for exercise and to save scattered grain. It works as well as a more costly arrangement and keeps the fowls in splendid vigor. Last spring there was scarcely an infertile egg in all my hatch.—Maine Bulletin.

Straw Stack Stables.

Wherever grain is largely grown the straw left after threshing will make a cheap and warm stable for stock, the ensuing winter. All that is needed is to set posts in the ground close enough together so that they will form a good support for a flat roof, and pile the straw over it and on at least three sides. The side not built up against may be used wholly as a door for stock to run in and out, or it may be boarded up, and one or two board doors made. Sometimes this straw stable is made against the side of a stack, and the animals are allowed to eat into it. This, however, is a dangerous practice, for the straw left after threshing is full of weeds and is full of insects, and so as to disturb the balance of the stack, bringing it over on them, and smothering them. Where the stack is built over a stout shed there is no such danger. It can be easily made as warm as any basement barn, and without much cost except of the straw.—American Cultivator.

Sowing Grass Seed.

One of the questions being discussed at the farmers' institutes is whether the old-time custom of sowing grass seed on grain is as beneficial of good results as sowing the seed alone. It is true that the grain shades the growing grass, but the stronger root growth of the grain crop must to a certain extent affect the young grass. Then there is the advantage, when grass seed is sown without using grain land, of thorough preparation of the soil for the grass crop, which is not the case when grain is seeded in the fall and grass in the spring. It is possible that if grass seed is sown on land that is fine and ready for the seed it will make much greater growth than when sown on grain and thus escape the effects of the dry season, which usually comes in summer. On sandy soil clover and the various grasses may be seeded down in August, but on clay soil the frost may throw the plants out during the winter. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that a grass crop can not be grown from spring seeding without the aid of a grain crop.

Golden Rod.

This native plant deserves a place in all gardens, and especially in those having a collection of American plants. It is so hardy, so showy, and so easily grown that it deserves more attention than it often gets. Each little shoot broken away from the old plant in the spring and planted in almost any way or place will become quite a plant by fall. A clump of it lights up the corner in which it grows like a bonfire. One of the chief merits of the plant is its late flowering quality. By its use we prolong the season greatly. With it should always be grown a variety of two or three late native asters. The two plants are boon companions, and one seems lonely without the other. Certainly the yellow glory of the golden rod is greatly heightened by the purple haze of the less showy but equally beautiful flowers, and between them there is a contrast that is full of most harmonious effects.

Sliding Barn Doors.

There should be no toleration of the old-fashioned swinging barn doors,

which winds will soon break from their hinges, making it impossible to operate them except by lifting the door and carrying it around. The sliding doors on iron rollers are easily kept in order, and are worked so easily that a little child has power enough to operate one of them. They have also the advantage that the door may be slightly opened and kept in that position, which would be difficult to do with doors swinging on hinges. The sliding door came into use when basement barns were constructed. In such cases the doors on the lower side, where they were 10 to 12 feet above the basement, had to be put on rollers. The convenience of the sliding door now makes it more desirable on barns, however they may be constructed.

Sowing Grass Seed. Clover seed on grain is sown as early as it can be done. It will be an advantage to go over the grain field with a smoothing harrow, which will not only benefit the grain but prepare the ground somewhat for the seed. Do not try to seed by using the hand, but sow with a seed sower, a wheelbarrow seed sower being excellent. If the wheat plants have been loosened by frost sow the clover seed and run the roller over the land. The weather conditions must, of course, influence the matter. Many farmers sow clover seed on the snow, allowing the rains and melting snow to carry the seed down; but there will occur a large loss of seed, which will be eaten by birds, some will freeze and become worthless, portions will not be covered by earth and the "catch" will largely depend on spring conditions.

Growing Tomatoes. A tomato grower of Charlestown, W. Va., is reported to have grown last season many tomato vines from thirteen to fifteen feet high, trained up to long edging strips, one end of which was in the ground. The tomatoes, which were of the common varieties, were trained to this unusual height by pinching off the runners or branches as they appear, and when quite small. The soil in which they grew was composed chiefly of well-rotted coal ashes, which had been on the ground for several years. The vines produced well and on Sept. 21 were full of smooth, green tomatoes, but not of very large size. Many farmers do not know that tomato vines can be so trained.

Potatoes After Corn. It is possible to grow a good potato crop after corn if the latter has been planted on an old sod heavily manured. In such case a good deal of the virtue of the soil was not secured by a dressing of the soil, but there is a dressing of well-rotted manure to be turned up by the spring plowing. It is much better to plant early potatoes on such land, and to plant them as early as a good seed bed can be had. Without a fresh soil to decay and furnish plant food and moisture in midsummer, the result with late potatoes would be that they dry up just at the critical time for making a crop.

Varieties of Peaches. It is believed that failures with peaches in many sections are partially due to the proper varieties for each section of the country not being selected. To learn more on the subject the work of testing the varieties has been submitted to twenty-four experiment stations, and it is believed that the results will be very beneficial. One of the great difficulties in the way of procuring varieties true to name. It is seldom that a peach grower succeeds in procuring the exact varieties ordered unless he knows from whom to buy or has evidence that no mistake will be made.

Money in Sheep. Many farmers who get rid of their sheep because wool did not pay have found that they made a mistake in so doing, as the ewes could have been made the foundation for something better. Sheep are not as easily procured now as two years ago, and fewer complaints are made regarding the profits from them. Oxford sheep, which produced heavy carcasses last year, on an Ohio farm, averaged eight pounds of wool per sheep also, thus proving that mutton breeds also pay as wool producers.

The Best Turkeys for Breeding. It is not surprising that turkeys should soon run out and become inferior in every way, when we remember how so many farmers choose their breeding stock. All the late birds stunted by corn feeding while young are saved, while those that are large and fine are sent to market. The idea is that the small bird will be fully grown, and as large as the largest by spring. But it never is. Saving the best birds for breeders insures earlier laying of eggs, and an early crop of turkeys next year.

Profits in Blackberries. Perhaps it is safe in asserting that in proportion to labor and capital invested no crop pays as large a profit as blackberries. Growers who complain that blackberries do not pay should first estimate the expense. There are blackberry fields that have borne crops for ten years, which have never received a pound of fertilizer or manure, and, outside of cutting away the old canes, with rough cultivation in the spring, have received no labor. What blackberries would do for the grower if treated like strawberries is yet to be demonstrated by some.

Stock that Gains in Value. One of the best rules for profitable farming is to always keep as much young