

Gardening Directed by the School

Town Lots Transformed Into Gardens for Raising Vegetables by Boys and Girls.

HOME gardening directed by the school is offered by Dr. P. P. Claxton, United States commissioner of education, as a solution for some of the most pressing educational and economic problems in city and suburban life. Dr. Claxton would have every vacant town lot transformed into a garden, where boys and girls would raise vegetables, berries and fruit for pleasure and profit. He would have one teacher in the community employed 12 months in the year to teach elementary science in school and direct the home garden work after school, on Saturdays and during the summer vacation.

Many Back Yard Gardens.

"Of the 13,000,000 children between the ages of 6 and 20 in the cities, towns, manufacturing villages and suburban communities of the United States," says Dr. Claxton, "not more than 15 per cent are away from home during the summer vacation or engaged in regular employment. The remaining 85 per cent remain at home without any useful, healthful, productive occupation requiring any large part of their time. On the other hand, there is much valuable land in back yards and vacant lots that is serving no useful purpose. The problem is to bring this land and these children together."

"In every school and community there should be at least one teacher who knows gardening, both theoretically and practically. This teacher should teach the elementary sciences in the schools during the school hours and should, out of school hours, direct the home gardening of the children between the ages of 7 or 8 and 14 or 15. If possible, the teacher should have the assistance of an expert gardener, so that the work may be done in the most practical and profitable way. The teacher and the gardener should help the children find the plots of ground in back yards, front yards and vacant lots near their homes best suited for gardening work, aid them by some co-operative method to have the lots properly plowed and prepared for cultivation, help them select seeds, show them how to plant, cultivate and harvest so as to obtain the best results."

Products For Home Use.

"Vegetables, berries and fruits grown should be used first as food for the children and their families; then the surplus should be marketed to the best advantage. Through the help of the teacher this can be done in a co-operative way. Ten or 15 cents worth of vegetables each day from the gardens of each of 200 children would amount to \$20 or \$30. In the summer and fall when the surplus is large and cannot be marketed to advantage, the teacher should direct and help the children in canning and preserving for winter use or for sale. The canning and tomato clubs of the southern states have already shown what can be done in this way."

"It is difficult to estimate the results of this plan when it shall be in full operation throughout the country. For the children it will mean health, strength, joy in work, habits of industry, an understanding of the value of money as measured in terms of labor, and such knowledge of the phenomena and forces of nature as must be had for an understanding of most of their school lessons. They will also learn something at least of the fundamental principle of morality; that each individual must make his or her own living; must, by some kind of labor of head, hand or heart, contribute to the common wealth as much as he takes from it; must pay for what he gets in some kind of coin."

Prevents Factory Work.

"This plan in full operation would probably do more toward keeping young children out of the factories and mills than all of the child-labor laws on the statute books. A boy 10 or 12 years of age, with a quarter of an acre of land, working under careful direction, can produce more for the support of the family than could be purchased with the child's wages from the mill. Children should not be ground in the mills nor sweated in the factories; their strength should not be sapped and their nerves racked by working in the heat and dust of indoors, yet all children should learn to work; it is good for them and they joy in it. To work with its feet in the soil,

its head in the sunshine and its lungs filled with good fresh air is not a bad thing for any healthy child.

"Probably one of the most valuable results of this plan would be to make it easy for most children to attend school three or four years longer than they now do, a thing more and more desirable, since education for life and citizenship in our industrial, civic and social democracy cannot be obtained before the age of adolescence. If a child can contribute to its support while in school, it may remain in school much longer than if it must be carried as a dead weight until it quits school to go to work."

Cost Inconsiderable.

"Compared with the results, the cost will be inconsiderable. No addition to the number of teachers will be required. It will only be necessary to require different preparation for one teacher in each school."

In the estimates submitted to congress by the commissioner of education for the support of the bureau in the next fiscal year an item of \$5700 is included to enable the bureau to begin the introduction of this kind of work in the schools of the United States. The commissioner believes that it will only be necessary to work out details of plans and to present them to school officers, together with full information in regard to results of somewhat similar work already done at various places.

Planting Corn for Fodder

(Communicated.)

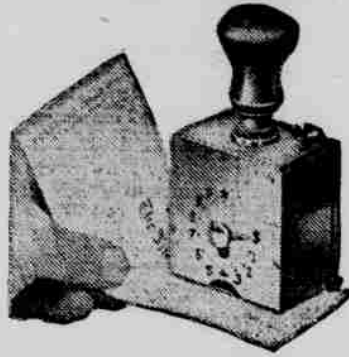
NOTICE on the cover of the Home and Farm Magazine Section of June 27 an article stating that corn intended for fodder or silage is planted much thicker than when raised for grain. I know this is the opinion of a great many people, but I will have to differ with them. It is a well-known fact that the more grain there is in the feed the better it is. If corn is planted thick it will never make much ear. Of course, if a roughage is all that is wanted it may be well to plant some thicker than for grain; but when planting corn for silage, plant it and tend it as though you were raising it for the crib, for the more and larger the ear the richer the feed. As to tonnage per acre, you will get as many tons as when planted thick, from the fact that the stock and blades will be larger and heavier, and with the extra weight of the ear you will raise as many tons or more than when planted thick, and when it is cut up fine and put in the silo the cattle will eat it up clean, stock and all. I will say here that the finest and richest corn silage I ever saw was in a silo owned by a Mr. Studing some five miles north of Eugene, and this corn was raised for the ear, and when one looked into the silo the feed was yellow with the grain. Mr. Studing used it as the grain ration to fatten his hogs, and with good success. But as I said before, if fodder is all that is wanted, then planting thick will do; but why be contented with fodder alone when a good grain crop can be raised at the same time!

Plant your corn and handle it as if you were trying to raise prize winning ears, is my advice, and you will have a heavy tonnage and a rich feed.

D. W. OSBORN.

The state of Pennsylvania celebrates two arbor days each year—one for spring planting and one for the fall—in April and October respectively.

READ EVERY WORD!!



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- Mr. Fruit Grower!

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