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The Editor of the Farmer invites correspondence from any reader upon any subject that may interest country people, or have a bearing upon improvement of conditions in rural life. All departments of this paper are open for the approval or disapproval of its readers and a free expression of opinion is invited.

GRANGE HEADQUARTERS IN 1915.

At the meeting of the California State Grange at Visalia in October, 1911, a committee was appointed whose duty was to be the making of arrangements for grange headquarters at the Panama Pacific Exposition at San Francisco in 1915.

The specific duties of this committee aside from providing headquarters were not defined but some general plan was unofficially outlined by those who proposed the plan both at Visalia and at Sebastopol in 1912.

As was suggested at the time of the committee's appointment there will be no doubt but that the National Grange will hold its annual session in San Francisco sometime during the progress of the fair. This event will doubtless be the final magnet in drawing thousands of grangers from the eastern states to attend the National Grange meeting, in conjunction with the exposition.

These Patrons of Husbandry, as is well known, are perhaps the most intelligent, level headed, progressive class of all our rural population.

During their stay in California they will want to see as much as possible of our great State, and one of the principal objects of this movement to provide grange headquarters, will be to receive them in as hospitable a manner as may be, have them registered properly, and hand them by word of mouth or printed matter, not only a guide to the wonders of the exposition but reliable, fair, not overdrawn, information regarding the resources and advantages of the 58 counties in California, each one remarkable for its productions, but differing from every other one in climate, soil and the development of its agricultural and horticultural possibilities.

Of Interest to All Californians.

With this information obtained from such a reliable source and from personal observation these thousands of country people will return to their homes, competent to advise and full of information to enquiring friends as to the conditions and advantages of California for the homeseeker.

These are the people that we want to come to California. They are intelligent, industrious, honest, capable agriculturalists and horticulturalists.

By placing the advantages of a home with us before them in a proper way we will be conferring upon them a valuable favor and all who may find their way to California and build homes among us will honor us by their presence.

NEW FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

Mr. Albert F. Etter of Briceand, Humboldt county, is an enthusiastic hybridizer of strawberries, and Columbines and promises some startling developments along the strawberry line in the near future.

His hybrid Columbine is remarkable for great variety of colors and vigor of plants, some of them growing five feet high.

To the lover of the home garden the production of new fruits or flowers is always interesting and, although a new creation may prove to be of little value away from its native environment, still it is only by trying them out that we know of their merits. In any case the pleasure of trying a new

WALNUT BLIGHT PREVALENT.

THE fact that some varieties of walnuts that have been considered heretofore to be immune—or partially so—from blight are showing more or less of the disease this year, faces us.

Just why this is so is a difficult question to answer; in fact, it cannot be answered at this time with any degree of accuracy.

"I told you so," is an easy and comfortable way to dismiss some matters of this kind.

Several years ago a walnut enthusiast with a brand new variety—about eight years in existence—in commenting on the merits of his acquisition claimed that it was blight proof and was somewhat "peevish" when some one remarked, "how do you know it is blight proof?" "Eight years is too short a time to prove that any variety of nut, fruit or other tree, shrub or plant, has merits that are to continue forever."

In the development of plant life and the eliminations that Nature unerringly performs in the testing out of her creations, time seems to be of little account. A few years or a lifetime or a thousand years may elapse before some principle of Nature is demonstrated to her satisfaction.

When Will We Know.

And while we are impatient with Nature when in the course of our experience we have some particular child of hers in which we take great pride and proclaim it perfect and free from the ills that beset the "common run," she gives us a shock—all the more violent because unexpected—it is well to take the experience cheerfully, particularly when we see others with troubles of a similar nature.

We should in fact feel content when we find that our lines have fallen in pleasant places for a longer period than some.

For many years the transcendent crab apple of Minnesota was considered absolutely hardy as to temperature and blight, when without, warning or any apparent reason, blight swept over the orchards, leaving them half dead and the crops ruined.

So with the walnut, we have felt somewhat secure with some varieties in certain locations. This year's experience with blight has been educational and will no doubt be of great value to thousands of future walnut growers in California. For walnut growing is only in its infancy.

The testing of varieties, for location and soil, has only begun. As with rice, cotton and corn the possibilities of California soils and climate are hardly yet born.

SELECT APPLE VARIETIES.

As the seasons progress and the early apples give way to later varieties and the later ones to the winter or long-keeping kinds, it is well for him who contemplates planting apple trees either for a commercial or a family orchard to watch the markets and the orchards as well, that an intelligent selection of varieties may be made.

Without a practical knowledge, by watching and handling, baking and stewing, making pies and apple cobbles, will the quality of a variety be determined. If found satisfactory then its behavior in the orchard, the size of the tree, its habits of fruiting, etc., should be considered and a test made in comparison with other varieties.

Also peoples tastes differ. One loves Bellflowers, another Pearmain, and still another Newtown Pippins. A grower of many varieties once said that his preference for commercial as well as home orchard apples could all be included in nine varieties which he called his Big 9.

They were San Jacinto, Gravenstein, Skinners, Bellflower, Fall Pippin, Stayman, W. W. Pearmain, Mammoth Black Twig, and Yellow Newtown Pippin. These ripen about in order named and are a most delicious and saleable collection.

plant is reward enough for most people.

Mr. Etter is also sure that the Northfield apple is better than any other for his section.

For the benefit of our readers in Humboldt county, in particular, we hope to hear from Mr. Etter often, and will bespeak for him a large and attentive host of readers.

TAKING THOUGHT OF NATURAL LAWS.

A LOT of discussion is going on in granges, farmers' unions and farm papers in regard to early pruning and early irrigation. The bursting into bloom of many prune trees after early irrigation has been wondered at and all sorts of reasons have been advanced. A little reasoning on the part of any one who has studied plant life in any intelligent way will find the reason why.

Years ago a text book was used in the common schools, entitled Well's Science of Common Things. In that little book the principles of science, which controlled the actions of the common every day things about us, were clearly and simply explained and the pupils were taught to recognize those principles when operating in other things than those treated in the book.

Following the plan of the little text book any one who has dealt with plants in the garden or greenhouse will know that lack of moisture will stop growth and if the plant is put in a cool place it will remain dormant, but if moisture is added while the plant remains in a warm place it will immediately prepare to grow again.

The past season has been very dry and notwithstanding early irrigation the earth became very dry and warm many feet deep and the prune trees become dormant.

The application of moisture before the cooler days of autumn, started them into growth again and in some instances they blossomed freely.

This only illustrates that a little careful thought of natural laws will enable the fruit grower to avoid the injurious and unpleasant results of improper action.

Effects of Early Pruning.

At least one fruit grower has advocated early pruning of trees that have become dormant by reason of drought giving as a reason that the energy of the tree would be conserved and better support the remaining wood.

A little careful thought along the same lines as indicated above will reveal the fact that so far as conserving the strength of the whole tree in the part that is left by cutting off some of its branches, it will have no effect whatever as the tree is dormant, the extreme ends, as well as every other part of the top of the tree is receiving no energy from the roots as they are quite as inactive as the top.

The only advantages to be gained by early pruning are several that have been stated before in these columns such as ease of detecting sickly or dead branches, the clearing of the orchard before the rains, etc., and the certainty of having the pruning done when by reason of winter rains and warmer weather the roots again become active and will not have the useless wood to support.

OUR BEST FRIEND IN WINTER.

A GOOD cover crop for our orchard lands is perhaps the most important thing that we may turn our attention to doing the next month.

In the early days of California orcharding, clean cultivation was the rule. All growing vegetation between the orchard trees was considered an enemy, and, whenever weather permitted, the plow, cultivator and weed-cutter were kept busy destroying it. An orchard free from weeds at all seasons and the soil in fine cultivation, was considered the best possible practice in fruit growing.

Methods of pruning were also different in the 70's and 80's. To cut back a cherry or walnut tree when planting, was considered rank heresy, but the apple and prune were cut back severely for several years after planting and sometimes old trees were so continuously cut back that the tops resembled enormous brooms.

A Change of Practice.

As the years passed by the discovery was made that by reason of faulty pruning in part the trees were no longer bearing good crops, the inside twigs and branches were dying, pests were increasing and the product becoming more and more unmarketable.

Then it also discovered that our trees were not properly fed. The plow sole caused by constant plowing and cultivating at the same depth, and the

hardpan caused by erroneous irrigation methods were starving our trees. Fertilization alone was not a sufficient remedy. Application of gypsum on hard soils benefited the surface a few inches but no more.

It was then that fruit growers awoke to the value of cover crops.

Instances of neglected (?) orchards where the weeds were allowed to grow until they covered the ground completely, a tangled mass of burr clover, wild oats, alfalfa, etc., sometimes waist high, were discovered to be doing better than the clean, cultivated ones. The soil was found to be mellow, not only on top but clear down as far as the roots of the green growth penetrated. That settled the matter with observing orchardists, and "how to grow more weeds" was the problem instead of "how to eradicate weeds."

Vetch and Other Legumes.

To stimulate a heavy growth of nitrogen-storing plants has been and is now the most important problem before the grower of fruits in California, during the winter months.

This is not so difficult in citrus groves or deciduous orchards of early maturing fruits for early irrigation and sowing will secure a good start of the legumes while the soil is still warm, but in the case of the prune grower the difficulties attendant upon late sowing arise.

The prunes are not gathered and the land cleared for action much before the first of October, when the nights are longer and cooler and the young plants start slowly.

A study of this situation and the trial of various varieties of bacteria-bearing plants seems to be the only alternative.

DO SILOS MAKE GOOD?

THE first American silo of which any record was made up to 1859 was built in 1875 by Dr. Manly Miles. It was an experiment pure and simple but was a success.

From that time to the present day silos have been built of all grades and sizes, some good, some bad, and some indifferent.

As some of the earlier silos were very primitive and still preserved the silage in good order it was soon discovered, after interest in them became thoroughly awakened, that the architecture of the silo was of less importance than the proper way of stowing the silage in them.

Loss of silage from air leaks whether from defects in the building itself or from improper filling gradually brought out the true principles of preserving corn and other foods in the silo.

The pit silo was found to be easy to fill but very inconvenient to get at and was naturally discarded. Then the square silo, whose walls would not stand the pressure and whose corners were more often moldy than not, was found to be impractical, also those with too great diameter and not great enough height.

That the silage must settle closely in order to create the proper amount of heat is well known, but the settling must be accomplished evenly in all parts of the silo. By too great pressure in the center and not enough at the edges or circumference a lot of good material is wasted.

It has been proven out quite satisfactorily that a silo should be approximately twice as high as its diameter within certain limits.

The smaller the diameter the less danger of losing any by molding as it is fed day by day. In case of a large herd of cows a larger silo, both in diameter and height, serves the purpose as more silage is needed each day.

Silos are not needed where constant green pasturage is assured, but as such a condition is the great exception a reasonable conclusion would be that no dairyman with a dozen or more cows can afford not to have silo. In times of drought or during stormy, wet seasons, when it is better for the pasture to keep the cows off from it, the silo becomes a money maker.

Do not prune Valencias or any other orange trees at this time. It is far better to wait until the coldest weeks of the winter season have passed and the vigorous spring growth is at hand.

That the appointment of county agricultural advisers may work for good seems probable. The merits of this new move will be carefully watched.