

California Associated Farmer

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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.

THE RICE INDUSTRY SPREADING.

Its Culture May Eventually Be Possible in Many Parts of California.

APPARENTLY 5000 acres of rice will be sown in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern counties the coming season. Some very rich land is being found around the lakes just suited to rice culture. It is safe to predict that a tryout of lands thought to be suitable for rice culture will uncover conditions favorable and unfavorable to its growth. In some locations the presence of a hardpan a few feet below the surface will facilitate the holding of water at the necessary depth. This may work out well during the growing season, but just what the effect will be when the fields must be drained to permit of harvesting will only be proven by trial.

The finding of suitable soils for rice in a number of districts in California is interesting when compared with the history of other products. Orange growing commercially was considered for many years as practicable only in southern California. Potato growing was attempted only along the rivers or moist coast lands. Prunes were thought of only in connection with Santa Clara valley, etc., but as the years passed by other locations in this great state were found where all these crops would grow and produce abundantly. No section of California may be said to enjoy a monopoly of any product of great importance. So with rice growing. Time alone will tell where the great rice fields of California will be found, and it is even probable that its distribution over the state may become more general than is now considered possible.

For the good of those interested in raising rice it is hoped that there will be no great rush into the industry, but that it will have a steady, hearty growth and as free as possible from all setbacks. Also that no large acreage will ever be planted on land more suitable and profitable for other crops.

We are printing in this issue considerable rice information which we trust will be interesting to farmers generally and valuable to those now engaged in growing rice as well as others who contemplate doing so.

Making Birdhouses—One of the results of the movement to create interest among schoolchildren in the everyday things about the home is the making of birdhouses, placing them in trees or on poles, and so arranged that they may be examined. Aside from the benefit to the boy or girl from an industrial standpoint, an insight into bird life may be obtained, and it is possible that from this beginning some practical way may be evolved to rid the farm of birds which injure farm crops and protect those that are beneficial.

Spraying Sometimes Injurious—The fact that fruit trees are sometimes injured by spraying or fumigating is more often due to neglect in following directions than from any other cause. While our commissioners are good men and well versed in the control of fruit pests it does not follow that they are infallible for they are not, but no blame can attach to them when a grower injures his trees by not following directions or uses poor judgment in his work.

FARM ADVISORS NOT NEW.

Domestic Science Traveling Schools Are Also Doing Good Work in Belgium.

FOR 30 years Belgium has sent agricultural experts out through its rural districts to teach farmers how to retain the fertility of the soil, as well as cultural methods that will enable them to raise the largest and best crops.

In Belgium this plan became imperative as the population had grown in numbers equal to the acres of farming land.

In addition to this advisor system they also had traveling schools to instruct the farm girls in domestic science, evidently recognizing the fact that it would be quite as important that the crops be used with economy and efficiency in the farm homes as that the quantity be increased.

While we Americans hope to see the day when our boys may be graduated from our public schools amply qualified to begin to farm, and our girls as efficient housekeepers, until that time arrives we must use such means as may be obtainable and practical, to help them to an intelligent discharge of their duties.

There are half a million farm women in Belgium. They have organized "circles" for self education and improvement and have proven to be great students, looking eagerly for anything that may help them in their work.

The subjects for discussion are numerous, some of them being, "General Agriculture," "Qualities of Farms and Farm Work," "A Day's Work on the Farm," "Poultry Raising," "Dairying," "Hygiene," "Duties of Mothers," and "Farm Women's Dress."

It is safe to assume that any nation which interests itself largely in such topics will never degenerate agriculturally.

SCHOOL DISTRICT EXHIBITIONS.

Should Be of Great Benefit to Pupils in an Industrial and Business Way.

GRATIFYING success has been attained by schools in exhibiting their products in gardening or mechanical work at county fairs which has given school industrial training a well deserved "boost," and has encouraged those who believe in and are working for industrial credits in schools, to increased efforts.

That the school credit for home work system has worked wonders in many schools and has been the means of interesting the children in industrial occupations has been amply proven.

To those then, who believe that interest in practical things will improve the pupil's ability to grasp his school studies and will eventually graduate him with a more efficient equipment for his life's work as well as an armor to protect him from the follies and vices which assail youth, this matter of school exhibitions has great interest.

To exhibit at fairs only would seem to be insufficient as they occur usually but once each year. It would seem to be a much better plan to have exhibitions often in order to keep the interest warm.

This would be particularly true if arrangements are made for sale of products as well as simply exhibiting for prizes.

In gardening for instance, the products will be maturing at various times during the year so that more chances to exhibit and more chances to sell would seem very important.

The Business Side—As the parents are quite as interested in this as the teachers they should do all in their power to assist the teachers in making the whole system attractive to the pupils and profitable as well.

It would seem impossible for a child to pass through the eight grades of a district school and graduate without a very good understanding of the practical side of his school education, as well as a business experience obtained by the sale of his products, which will be of great value to him particularly as he will not be compelled to obtain it by friction with the world in the ignorant condition that most of our schoolchildren are in when graduated.

Tree Planting in Contra Costa—More fruit trees are being planted this season in the Walnut creek and Concord districts than ever before. Altogether the outlook for coming years of prosperity was never better in that section.

A FORESTRY BOARD.

A Profitable and Desirable Addition to County Government.

EVERY county in California should have a forestry board with duties as broad and various as the conditions of tree and plant growth in the different counties will demand, or the intelligence and efficiency of the members will discourse to be necessary; for the protection of natural and cultivated trees and the planting where deemed advisable of trees, shrubs and flowers, as local conditions may determine.

The law permitting the appointment of a forestry board in a county, was drawn by Mr. Nicholas Bowden of San Jose at the request of the Outdoor Art league. It is simple and explicit in its provisions and has been observed with success by several counties.

The law provides that the county board of supervisors may appoint five persons, one from each supervisorial district to constitute a county board of forestry which shall serve without pay. This board may in turn appoint a county forester who will be the working official and may be paid a salary not to exceed \$150 per month; not a large sum for one who is qualified to do the work properly.

On the basis of economy some boards of supervisors have refused to appoint a forestry board, the different members taking it upon themselves to look after the planting and protection of trees upon the highways; a very unsatisfactory method from the standpoint of those interested in planting of trees and other growing things for the comfort of travelers and beautification of the county in which they live.

In the meantime those counties which are wide awake to their interests are prosecuting the matter of tree-planting and general beautification with vigor and are quite as vigorously defending the natural growth of trees upon the public highways and county property; through the medium of their forestry boards and county foresters, while those counties without organized protection are losing steadily many fine trees and are not encouraging new plantings.

It would seem wise for every county to have a forestry board from an advertising standpoint if for no other reason.

WHERE TO REPLANT.

Plant Where the Old Tree Stood and Not Elsewhere.

ADVICE as to methods of replanting in old orchards where from any cause a tree had been removed was in the earlier days of fruit-growing invariably to avoid planting where the old tree stood but somewhere between.

The givers of this advice it is needless to say had not had much experience with fruit-growing or tree planting.

The facts are that the exact spot from which an old tree has been removed is the most favorable place to start a young tree; first, because only the large main roots of the tree have occupied that space for many years, and they not not absorbing fertility from the soil, it has had an opportunity to recuperate. Second, the feeding roots of the trees occupy practically all of the space between the rows except immediately about the tree and have drawn heavily from its fertility.

By planting where the old tree stood an opportunity may be had to fertilize the soil between the rows by the time the roots of the young tree will need it.

Other Points in Planting—Without doubt thousands of dead or badly injured fruit trees will be pulled or dug out of California's orchards this season, the cause being principally lack of moisture the past two dry seasons.

Where only an occasional tree is dead replanting will probably be done at once, and the advice given in a former issue "to plant only good trees" should be heeded religiously in replanting with the very best trees to start with, it is still imperative that special care be given these young trees for several years. They must not lack for moisture and mulching helps as the moisture is retained and the earth kept cooler during the hot summer days.

Also shading the trunk must be done to prevent sunburn and the inroads of

CLEAN CULTURE AND COVER CROPS.

Let the Weeds Grow and Also Sow Cover Crops to Improve the Soil.

AN object lesson in orchard practice may be had in a drive about any fruitgrowing district at this time of the year.

Forty years ago before the prune-planting craze swept over California clean culture in deciduous orchards was universal. Weeds of all kinds were considered an abomination and a vigorous warfare was waged against them in season and out. The fruitgrower whose land was covered with green growth even during the rainy season was considered a back number and lacking in the vigor and enterprise that should characterize a successful fruit-grower.

When shortly after the first rains in October or November the sprouting seeds indicate a healthy weed crop, the cultivator and sometimes the plow was used to destroy them.

The orchard with a cover crop in those days was the exception and looked upon as either a case of neglect on the part of the owner or very bad orchard practice.

A ride through any California fruit district in February now will reveal a very different condition in the orchards. Clean culture in winter is now quite as exceptional as cover crops were in the early days of fruitgrowing. This condition has been brought about more from the observation and practical experiences of the growers than from any acquired information from books or agricultural colleges as to the proper management of soils or crops.

When after a series of years of careful clean culture winter and summer, the fruitgrower found that his land was becoming dead cloddy, hard to work and sometimes sour, he began to look for a remedy.

Liming helped some to soften the clods, but the land did not look right, was lifeless and refused to produce a crop of anything but nettles and other worthless weeds.

While some were experiencing the above troubles others were learning that a good heavy crop of weeds when for any reason they could not get them turned under until April always left the soil in a mellow and lively condition.

An instance in point is of a ten-acre orchard which for good reasons was left each year until March and produced a heavy crop of clover, wild oats, alfalfa and other growth. The land was rather heavy but each year became more friable and easy to work until the contrast between it and land adjoining which had clean culture became so marked as to create an inquiry. The reason was easily arrived at and resulted in a change of practice with others who were having trouble with stubborn or sour soil.

A Corn and Apple Show—Charlotte Grange, Mich., held a successful show in December in which corn and apples vied for honors. The sisters served a supper and netted \$50.

Using the Schoolhouse—The farmers of Southside school district, in San Benito county, have availed themselves of the law permitting the holding of public meetings in schoolhouses, and have enjoyed and no doubt profited by listening to lectures by professors from agricultural schools, as well as taking part in the discussion of questions of interest to country people.

Plant Grape Cuttings Late—Experienced grapegrowers have found better success with grape cuttings when planted rather late. If planted early while the rains and cool weather are still on the ends of the cuttings do not seem to callous well and they do not start readily. Cuttings may be kept in perfect condition in clean moist sand or sawdust.

borers. One borer will kill a young tree in a season.

If a whole block of trees must be removed a good plan is to plow deeply and raise annual crops for several years before replanting.

If a leguminous crop may be raised in winter and turned under in time to plant, corn, squashes, tomatoes or other crops, so much the better.