

SOWING SEEDS.

This is one of the most important garden operations. Seeds to germinate well, require light, heat, air and moisture. They should be sown when the ground is mellow and fine, and if possible, before a gentle rain; and the soil should be rolled or gently pressed upon the seed, after sowing. The freshest seeds of some varieties often fail from improper management in sowing. When sown too early, while the ground is wet, they are apt to rot. When sown too shallow, in a dry time, they may not be sufficient moisture to sprout them, or they may be destroyed by dry and hot weather, after they have germinated. Insects may destroy the plants before or as soon as they appear out of the ground. Powerful manures such as hen dung, guano, and chemical manures, if under powerful fermentation will frequently destroy the vitality of seeds, and sometimes kill the tender plants. Complaints frequently made that seeds sown are not good, may quite as often be attributed to other causes as to the quality of the seeds. The first effect of air, heat and moisture upon the seed, is to change its starchy matter into a sugary pulp, the proper food of the embryo. It, at this time, the seed be withered by exposure to heat, without sufficient covering it will perish. It often happens that seeds are planted in a fresh dug soil, and the above change in the properties of the seed takes place, but the earth not being pressed upon it, the seed dries up and the embryo perishes. Others, again are buried too deeply, and though the seeds swell, yet sufficient warmth and air are not obtained to give it life. The first thing in sowing, is a suitable preparation of the soil, so that the young roots thrown out, may easily penetrate it. It must be made more or less fine for different seeds. Peas, corn, beans, and coarse seeds do not require the soil to be as finely pulverized as small seeds. The seeds must be firmly fixed in the soil, and pressed by the earth in every part, in order to retain moisture sufficient to encourage vegetation; but they should not be so deeply buried as to be deprived of air, or to have their ascending shoots impeded by too much soil above. In all cases, seeds should be sown in fresh dug soil, that they may have the benefit of the moisture within; but they should never be put in when the soil is really wet, as the ground will bake and the seeds perish. Moist weather in spring or summer is excellent for putting in seeds provided the ground is mellow. Just before a light rain is the best possible time for sowing most seeds. When the seeds are planted, the earth should be usually pressed upon them with a roller, or by treading with the feet in the case of large seeds, or by smoothing the surface with the back of a spade, or by walking over them on a board, for the smaller kinds. Light must be excluded until the roots can derive nourishment from the soil. When they come up, keep them free from weeds, and thin as directed.

PROTECTING SHEEP.—A writer in the *Farmer's Home Journal* gives his method for protecting sheep against dogs, which is the same as that effectually practiced by a friend of ours in the early settlement of one of the Western States. He says: I have kept a flock of sheep several years, varying from one to two thousand head, and for the last eight years have not lost a sheep killed by dogs. I keep my sheep yarded nights; and occasionally, varying from once in two weeks to once a month, I go out at bedtime and place around the outside of the pen, bits of meat containing strychnine, which I take up again early in the morning, if not eaten in the night. Result—immunity from dogs, and an old well on the farm has received a layer of dogs and a layer of dirt until it is about full. I have never killed a man's dog through malice, or anywhere except on my own premises and in protection of my own property, and have not, to my knowledge, receiving any injury in retaliation for the death of any dog. The plan is just and right, and every fair-minded man must acknowledge it. Every person in the vicinity who chances to be the owner of a dog, 'strayed or stolen,' concludes at once that he has found a resting place in Cotton's old well, and will never believe anything else. I never report dogs buried before sunrise.

COAL ASHES FOR FOWLS.—The Massachusetts Ploughman urges upon its readers the importance of keeping a liberal supply of coal ashes by their fowls. The birds delight to wallow in the dusty material, and a daily bath so taken is a grand specific against lice.—Wood ashes are not so desirable as coal, in fact they cause sore feet if the birds wallow in them much. The amount of pieces of coal and burnt limes one the fowls find to eat in the coal ashes is very great, and we have noticed that hens which have free access to an ash heap are always in good health and are great layers.

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By order of the Board
CHAWFORD LINDSAY,
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June 1877

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