



MODERN FARMER



Canadian Garden Service 1950

By Gordon Lindsay Smith

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It's not just Good Luck

"He's always lucky in transplanting things". One often hears a comment like that in the spring or fall when trees, shrubs, vines and other things that come under the heading of nursery stock are being planted or moved. But it's not luck at all. It is merely knowing how.

There is a great variation in prices of rose plants, shrubs and trees, and there is even a wider variation in quality. Good healthy stock is green, pliable, moist and equipped with sound buds, but not in leaf. It is only with such stock that one can be "lucky". When purchased, good stock will be well wrapped to keep moisture and keep out the air, especially about the roots. The buyer should make sure he keeps it that way.

If not ready to plant immediately the stock should be "heeled in" that is, planted in a shallow trench with soil pressed firmly about roots

and over the lower part of stem. In planting permanently it is well to plant a little deeper than previously, spread roots out well, cover firmly with a fine, rich soil, water well, then tramp down hard. A small tree or shrub usually needs a full gal of water and if it doesn't rain there should be more watering for the first few weeks. Trees should be tied firmly to a stake for the first year. This will give the tiny, new roots a chance to get firmly fastened in the new location. Without these fine roots the stock will die of starvation.

Can Make Good Soil

It's amazing what one can do with even the most unproductive soil. For confirmation all that is necessary is to look at what some city gardeners have done with the assorted blue clay mortar and broken bricks some builders have used for grading up the backyard. Almost anything will disintegrate in time and what won't can be hauled away or used for drainage.

With very heavy soil and lying fairly level some drainage is needed. With large plots this can be done by installing tile drains although an open ditch will be a lot cheaper and may do well enough. After this, treatment for very heavy or very light soils is about the same. The main thing is to get in plenty of humus and cultivate. Humus is simply a high class name for ordinary manure. Grass cuttings, straw or even just green weeds and other plants. The more of this stuff that is dug in the more open and porous the soil becomes.

Where possible it's a good plan to grow a crop of clover, fall rye, oats or some rank-growing things and dig or plow this under. After a few years' treatment even the toughest or most barren soil becomes mellow and as the old timers say, friable.

Next Week—what to grow in special locations, and most for the money.

New Varieties Need Fa'r Test

Plant breeders who are responsible for the development and introduction of new varieties are usually cautious in making recommendations on adaptability, disease resistance, maturity and the like. Such recommendations are naturally based on extensive tests covering different soils and climates, and they do not apply to individual farms or even local conditions.

Small soil differences, lack of good drainage, low fertility, weeds and other factors may offer sufficient handicaps to the performance of a new variety to condemn it in the opinion of the grower. When new varieties are being tried for the first time the grower must bear this in mind, for unless normal growing conditions are provided, it is not a fair test. If an unfamiliar variety is offered for sale outside the area for which it is normally recommended, it is best to make inquiries from reliable sources as to its origin and possible adaptability for other areas. Failing this, the seed should only be used at first for small scale tests.

Asparagus Culture For Best Results

Asparagus is cultivated for the tender shoots that develop in the early spring from buds borne on the rhizomes. The plant is a native of temperate regions and is best suited to sections where low temperatures stop growth and permit a rest period, says E. W. Chipman of the Dominion Experimental Station, Kentville, N. S.

The long time that the land is occupied by an asparagus plantation makes it highly desirable that the soil be made fertile and be put into the best physical condition before the plants are set. One of the essentials is a soil well supplied with humus to encourage the extensive root system. The soil reaction should be in the pH range 6.0 to 6.8.

The crowns for setting may be purchased from a nursery or can be home grown. The latter method is perhaps the most desirable when many crowns are needed. In growing the plants the seed should be soaked in water (16 F-96 F) for four or five days before sowing and then sown in rows 2 feet apart and later thinned to 3" in the row. This should be done very early in the spring. The plants are left in the nursery for one or two years depending on their size.

In setting the plantation only large healthy crowns, which have not been allowed to wither or heat, should be selected. The crowns are dropped every 18 to 24 inches in a 7-8 inch deep furrow, and the roots are spread out and covered with 2 to 3 inches of soil. As cultivation is practised to kill weeds, more soil is worked in about the shoots until the furrow is filled. Rows are usually placed 4 to 6 feet apart.

Once a plantation has been established it should be fertilized every year as most of the material from which the shoots are formed in the spring is stored in the fleshy roots of the crown during the previous summer and fall. Thus the aim is to produce a heavy top growth after the cutting season is over. Before cutting, in the early spring a 5-10-10 fertilizer at the rate of 1.50 pounds per acre could be applied. After cutting 30-40 pounds of available nitrogen per acre might be added.

Weed control is very important in the asparagus plantation. This may be done by shallow cultivations or with selected weed killers such as cyanamid 2,4-D and oil sprays. The time of weeding and the first harvest should be at least two years. The length of cutting time of a young plantation can best be gauged by the growth of the tops in the previous season—usually two to three weeks the first season and up to eight weeks after the plantation is three or four years old. The variety Mary Washington is recommended for yield and because of its resistance to rust.

At the opening of business on March 1, the stocks of creamery butter on hand in Canada amounted to 36,578,000 pounds, according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Cold storage warehouses had in store 28,307,000 pounds, while dairy factories held 8,041,000 pounds. Butter in transit amounted to 230,000 pounds. The total was higher than last year by 17.8 million pounds. The five-year average of March 1 stocks is 18,489,000 pounds. The February 1950 "out-of-storage" movement was 957 million pounds as compared with a similar movement of 89 million pounds last year.

The total stocks of cheese on March 1, were 38,813,000 consisting of 28,208,000 pounds Canadian, 85,000 pounds imported and 342,000 pounds in transit. The summary total was higher than last year by 10.7 million pounds and showed an "out-of-storage" movement of 2.6 million pounds.

During 1949 there were 1.4 million head of cattle slaughtered under inspection in Canada and 318 thousand head of life cattle were exported to the United States. This total is 2.1 per cent below the inspected slaughter and live stock exports of 1948, and only 3 per cent below the high record established in 1945.

Before the war Canada produced only a small part of the cranberries consumed and the prices normally followed that set in the large export region centred around Cape Cod Mass. Notwithstanding the new bogs planted and the old ones renovated, the Canadian crop still meets only a fraction of the demand.

The average value of occupied farm land in Canada for 1949 is reported by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics at \$40 per acre. This represents an increase of only 2.6 per cent over the average value in 1946 but the increase over the

The Development Of New Oat Varieties

(Experimental Farms News)

New varieties are always in demand either as a means of better crop insurance and higher yields or of creating a wider seed market. In eastern Canada, several new oat varieties have been introduced during the past few years. With few exceptions these varieties have been found adapted for limited areas only and have not spread to any extent beyond these limits.

The varieties Erban, Ajax and Beaver, however, have shown fairly wide adaptability and are being grown in all eastern provinces. While a variety possessing wide adaptability as regards soil and climate is favoured, the trend in variety improvement in recent years appears to be toward the development of varieties adapted more particularly for conditions prevailing in smaller areas. Such a trend is likely to increase the number of varieties but will help in solving variety problems for local conditions, says R. A. Derick, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa.

No new oat varieties were licensed for sale in Canada in 1949. The introduction of several new oat varieties in the U. S. A., particularly in the north central states, has created interest among Canadian growers. Most of these varieties are resistant to some of the races of stem rust to which the Canadian varieties are susceptible. Some of these have excellent straw. None, however, has proved superior in yield to our own varieties in tests conducted by the experimental institutions and cannot therefore be recommended. Furthermore, during the past two years there has been a substantial increase of certain crown or leaf rust races both in the U. S. and Canada, to which these American varieties are susceptible.

The plant breeders are finding it difficult to cope with the ever-changing disease problems and as a result, newly developed hybrid strains, which might have been released are being held back until further disease resistance can be incorporated into them.

Plant breeders who are responsible for the development and introduction of new varieties are usually cautious in making recommendations as regards adaptability, disease resistance, maturity, and so forth. Such recommendations are based on extensive tests covering different conditions of soil and climate, but do not always apply to individual farms or even to local conditions. Small soil differences, lack of good drainage, low fertility, weeds or other factors may offer sufficient handicaps to the performance of a new variety to condemn it in the opinion of the grower. When new varieties are being tried for the first time by growers it is only fair to provide at least, normal growing conditions. If sale outside the area for which it was recommended it is best to make inquiries from reliable sources as to its origin and possible adaptability for other areas, before seed is purchased, except for small scale tests.

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Dairying Up In New Zealand

Dairy production in New Zealand in 1949 set a record and this seems likely to continue into the present year. The first few months of the present dairy season show high production figures with an additional 50,000 cwt. in milk and an increased yield of four pounds of butterfat per head for all cows.

Creamery butter production was 162,600 tons in 1949 compared with 149,000 tons in 1948. The output of cheese was 99,400 tons in 1949, an increase of 18,000 tons over the previous year. The output of canned milk products is expected to surpass the 1948 production of 29,000 tons. On a butterfat basis the total of 397.6 million pounds in 1949 was well above the 330 million pounds in 1948. The increased emphasis on dairying was accompanied by some reduction in wheat acreage and a slight increase in oats and barley.

Exports of Canadian dressed beef and veal to the United States in 1949 were 85 million pounds, equivalent to about 200 thousand head of cattle. This is a gain of about the equivalent of 30 head over 1948.

The world cotton crop is estimated at slightly less than 31 million bales of which United States growers produced over 16 million bales.

Cranberry Production In Eastern Canada

(Experimental Farms News)

Many cranberry growers in eastern Canada report heavy losses on their past year's operations as a result of the sudden break in prices that came in the midst of the picking season, says E. L. Eaton, Experimental Station, Kentville, N. S.

In the pre-war years Canada produced only a small part of the cranberries consumed and the price normally followed that set in the large export region centred around Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Notwithstanding the new bogs planted and old ones renovated, the Canadian crop still meets only a fraction of the demand.

During the war years a large part of the United States crop was processed for the armed services with a consequent shortage for civilian needs. This unusual competition between processors and fresh fruit dealers forced prices far above what would normally be deemed a reasonable figure. Canadian growers profited by this turn of affairs and when currency restrictions entirely excluded reported cranberries from Canada, the 1949 price here was pegged near this peak.

Meanwhile with the United States Government no longer buying and sugar rationing ended, dealers and processors found themselves caught with an over-supply bought at the high prices. To complicate matters still further, favourable weather, the use of newer insecticides and better care of the bogs encouraged by the high prices, all contributed to a series of large crops. To clear the market, prices in the United States were drastically cut in 1948 and 1949, Canadian exchange reserves were eased, markets were flooded at once with high quality, attractively packed Cape Cod cranberries and prices tumbled to the import level.

Cape Cod growers are no more happy about the situation, which is generally conceded to be netting them much less than their cost of production, than are Canadians. However, marketing organizations are reported to be making some headway in clearing off the surplus and when this is accomplished a return to more equitable price levels is expected.

The long-time picture of the cranberry industry is relatively favourable. Population on the North American continent is increasing more rapidly than the production of cranberries and for most consumers this delightful fruit is still only a relish for festive occasions. If even half of our housewives would add a pound of our present low-priced cranberries to the regular Sunday dinner menu the sur-

Lawns Respond To Simple Care

(Experimental Farms News)

Proper care of a grass lawn is most important in maintaining its appearance and prolonged its life. Four main operations have been used with extremely favourable results at the Experimental Station, Lehighbridge, Alta., says W. E. Torfason.

Frequent mowing of the lawn is necessary in spring and early summer when the lawn is growing rapidly, but as growth slows down in dry weather and in autumn, mowing can be reduced. If the lawn is mowed often enough, clippings need not be gathered as they will settle and form a light mulch around the grass crowns, later they break down to add organic matter to the soil. The lawn should go into the winter with a good protective covering of grass.

Proper watering of lawns is most important and brings stronger, deeper rooted turf. Light sprinkling, as done by most home owners, is of little use as only the upper layer of soil is moistened and the growth of surface feeding roots is stimulated. In periods when the lawn is not watered, this layer becomes dry and the plants suffer. It is far better to water less frequently, but to give the soil a thorough soaking on each occasion. The plants there are not dependent on surface moisture and will withstand the hot sun and dry weather.

Fertility is often overlooked. Fertility can be maintained by applications of well rotted barnyard manure, or commercial fertilizers, as top dressings. Manure dressing has been used with good success in the past but is gradually being displaced by commercial fertilizers. Manure is applied late in the fall, and is raked into the turf or removed in the spring. Commercial fertilizers are usually applied in the spring of the year but may be applied in the autumn. The correct mixture of commercial fertilizer will vary from one area to another, but since nitrogen promotes vegetative growth, a high nitrogen fertilizer is suggested. Weeds must be controlled in order to have a lawn of good appearance. In new lawns, weeds should not be permitted to go to seed. This can be done by frequent mowings. A good vigorous turf, obtained by proper watering and fertilization, will serve to check weed growth. In lawns which are well established perennial weeds such as dandelions and plantain are often troublesome. These may be controlled by spraying with 2,4-D at rates and concentrations prescribed by the manufacturers. Spraying is most effective in the spring when the weeds are in their most vigorous stage of growth. plus would disappear like snow in June.

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