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BEST WAYS OF DIGGING AND STORING POTATOES

By W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist.

The best time to dig potatoes, if they are not affected with late blight or rot, is as soon as the tops have died. If the weather is dry or where the tops remain green until killed by frost, the digging should be delayed until that time, as during September there is often a great development of tubers. Where potatoes are grown on the average farm the digging is usually left as a matter of convenience until after the corn is harvested, where that crop is grown, as when the tubers are covered with soil, the latter may be frozen an inch or so in depth, without out the crop being injured. Potatoes should not, however, be left in the ground when there is danger of the ground freezing to a greater depth. When the soil is fairly well drained and not particularly wet the digging may be delayed for a month or more without much injury to the crop if the tubers are healthy; however, where there is no disease the sooner the potatoes are dug, after the tops are dead, the better.

Potatoes which have been killed by late blight will usually rot as soon as the conditions are favorable, and for this reason it is better to leave a diseased crop in the ground as long as possible, as the tubers which are diseased will, most of them, show signs of rot before they have to be taken up on account of frost, and they need not be gathered. If diseased potatoes are dug and stored as soon as the tops are dead, the disease will be almost certain to develop in the pit or cellar, and healthy tubers will rot from contact with the diseased ones. It is not good practice to dig diseased potatoes early and pile them in the field. It is better to delay digging as long as possible and then put the potatoes in a cool, well-ventilated cellar where the disease may be checked. Potatoes in wet soil should be dug sooner than those in that which is drier and well drained.

Potatoes should be dug in dry weather, so that when they are taken to the cellar or store room they will be perfectly dry. If the tubers are housed when wet, the conditions become very favorable for the development of any disease which may affect them and for the rotting of the healthy potatoes from contact with those thus affected.

Where there are large areas to be dug a good potato digger is essential. Not only will a potato digger raise the crop more economically than a fork or plough, but with it the grower is more likely to get his crop dug and piled up while the weather is fine, which is a great consideration. There are a number of good potato diggers now on the market which will dig up and leave on the surface of the soil practically all the tubers.

Ploughing potatoes out is quite a common method among farmers, but in ploughing them out there is always a considerable number of potatoes left in the ground, and the additional labor required to pick up these potatoes which are scattered all over the field after harrowing is an item.

The old-fashioned, yet thorough, way of digging with the four-tined potato fork is too slow and expensive a method, now that good men are difficult to get and wages are so high, but where these do not have to be taken into consideration as good or better work is done by a man than by any implement. A man with a fork will dig little more than half an acre a day; a good potato digger will dig from three to five acres a day.

Storing Potatoes. Potatoes should be stored dry in a cool, well-ventilated cellar which is perfectly dark. There is no doubt that great losses occur every year from the careless storing of wet potatoes in comparatively warm and poorly ventilated cellars and piled in great heaps, giving ideal conditions for the development of any disease which may be in them and very favorable conditions for rotting. The expense of providing a good system of ventilation for a cellar would be soon offset by the better condition in which the potatoes would keep; hence the more profit there would be from them. Should it be considered unwise to go to this expense, every effort should be made to have as free air circulation about the potatoes as possible. Instead of piling the potatoes against the wall on the floor, slats should be nailed a little apart about six inches or more from the wall. This will give circulation of air behind the pile. A temporary floor should be put down about six inches above the permanent floor, with cracks between the boards. This will permit air to circulate under and through the pile. Then if the piles have to be made very large, square ventilators of wood made of slats and running from the top to the bottom of the pile could be put in here and there through the pile. These with the ventilation afforded at the sides and bottom will keep the potatoes in a much better condition than if they were in a

solid pile. Another good plan is to keep the potatoes in large crates made with slats. The ventilation between these crates would assist very much in keeping the tubers in good condition. Thousands of bushels of potatoes are lost every year, when there is disease in the crop, by neglecting ventilation. The temperature of the cellar or store-house should be kept as nearly 32 degrees to 35 degrees F. as possible. The cooler potatoes are kept without freezing the better. Not only is the value of the tubers for seed lessened by sprouting, but they are also much injured for eating. Moreover, if the potatoes are held over to sell in the spring, sprouting will cause a great deal of shrinkage in weight. It is important to have some means of letting an abundance of fresh air into the cellar towards spring, when it becomes more difficult to keep the potatoes in good condition. Cool air should be let in at night when the outside temperature is lowest and the cellar should be kept closed during the day.

Temporary Storage.

Sometimes it is difficult to set all the crop to the cellar at digging time, and when this is the case the potatoes may be put in piles of forty or fifty bushels in a place where water will not lie and covered with straw, with a little earth on top to keep them dry. If the weather becomes cold, if the potatoes are diseased, however, it is not safe to pile them in this way, and even if they are healthy, piling in the field should be avoided if at all possible, as the crop is much easier to handle afterwards in the cellar than outside in the cold, perhaps inclement, weather. If potatoes are found to be diseased at digging time, a good plan is to fix up a place in the barn where it is quite dry and where frost can be kept out for a time and spread the potatoes in shallow piles.

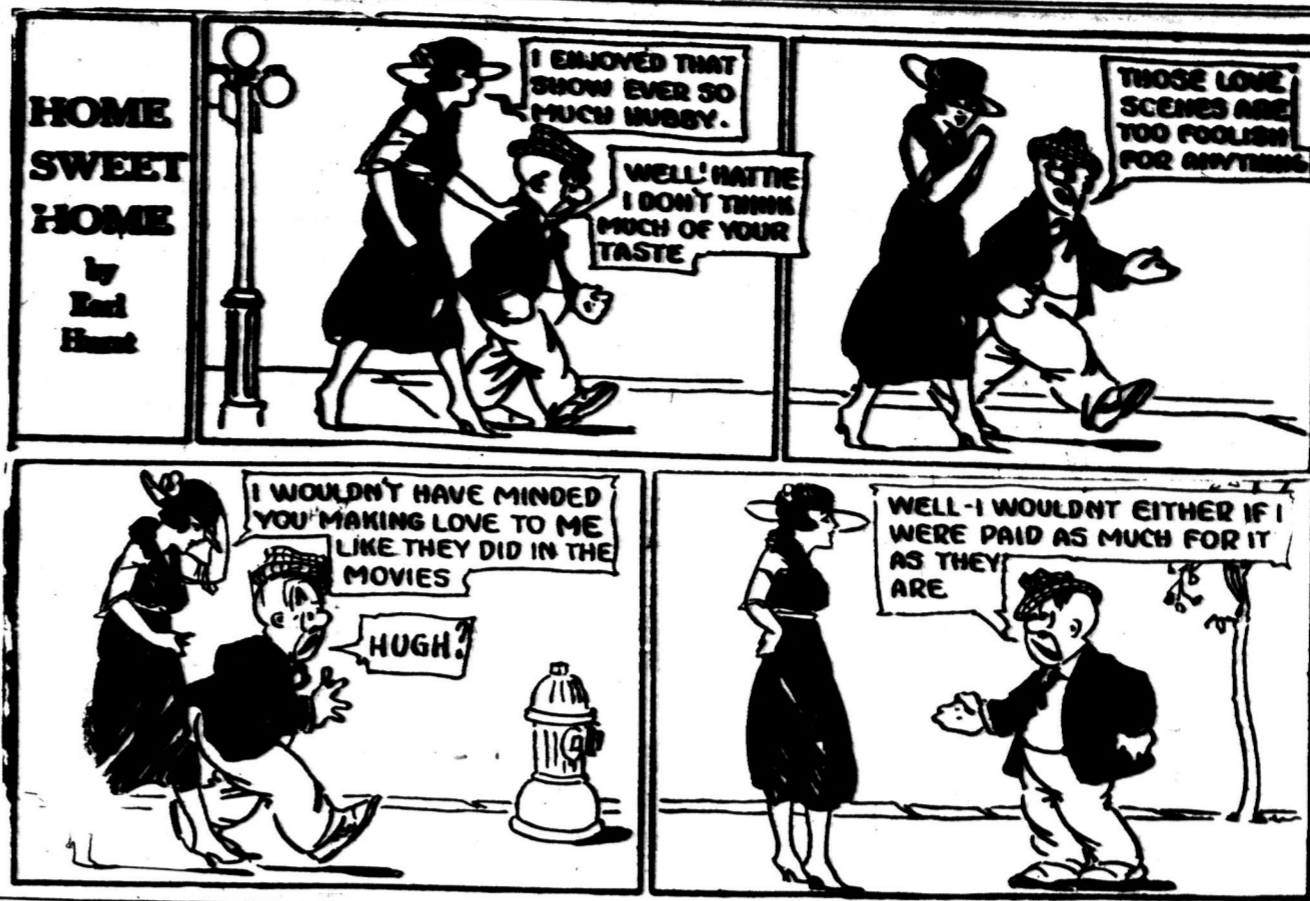
Many persons are growing potatoes for the first time this year in either small or moderately large quantities. The methods just described can be used by such persons in many cases. In other cases the quantity grown being quite small, can all be stored in the cellar as soon as the potatoes are dug. In storing in the cellar it is better to keep the potatoes in boxes or crates rather than in bags, as the latter are liable to rot. Moreover, when the potatoes start to sprout, as they will do during the winter, they will be more quickly noticed when in boxes and the sprouts kept removed. The oftener the sprouts are removed, when they appear, the better the potatoes will keep, but where possible the potatoes should be kept so cool that they will not sprout. Before storing even small quantities of potatoes it is desirable to have them quite dry.

THE HOME MARKET.

There is a thoughtless optimism in Canada to-day which disregards the probable effect upon agriculture, as upon other industries in Canada, of the rehabilitation of production abroad, and particularly in Europe. The situation and its significance are frankly stated in a recent editorial in the New York Journal of Commerce, which says:

"The exporter of agricultural products must, in common with other exporters, meet the problem of the inability of foreign nations to finance purchases of the production of our farms. Under the stimulus of the Government's efforts to increase home production the agricultural output of a number of the recently belligerent nations is rapidly returning to normal. European agriculture generally is showing remarkable recovery, though there are some exceptions, such as some of the Balkan States and Russia. It is thought that after the present harvest Europe, with the exceptions above mentioned, will be back almost to pre-war conditions as far as production of domestic foodstuffs is concerned. A considerable amount of butter and potatoes have recently reached this country from Denmark; Australian and New Zealand mutton will have lately been imported into the United States. The imports of Egyptian onions have reached pre-war quantity. Large quantities of Rumanian wheat have been sold to Italy and other European states."

The Journal of Commerce thinks, however, that until Russia again enters the world markets with her grain it is probable that this continent will be able to find profitable sale abroad for its entire exportable surplus of breadstuffs; and that good markets for dairy products and meats will continue in Europe for some time. Canadian agriculturists will do well to consider what these developments mean. Every country in the world is striving to increase its farm production and to decrease its dependence upon outside sources of supply. Competition for markets abroad is certain to become increasingly keen, despite the perennial warnings of disciples of Malthus. Farsighted agriculturists in



Good Seed To Increase Crops

What good seed means to Canada was very clearly shown by a few figures submitted by Mr. L. H. Newman, Secretary of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association, at the Conference on Soil Fertility and Soil Fibre, held at Winnipeg by the Commission of Conservation.

Each spring Canada requires approximately 65,000,000 bushels of seed grain and 9,000,000 bushels of seed potatoes, or about 8 per cent of her annual average production. About 41,000,000 acres are annually planted to these crops in Canada. An increase of but one bushel per acre of this area would add approximately \$30,000,000 to the wealth of the country.

SILOS AND SILAGE.

In most sections, this summer has been a most favorable one from the standpoint of milk production. Few indeed have been the complaints about drought and pasture shortage. Dame Nature has been teaching a most valuable lesson. She has shown the value of keeping cows comfortable and providing them with an abundance of palatable, succulent, nutritious food.

The demonstration should suffice to prove to the man who milks cows that he can always secure favorable production if he sees to it that his cows are comfortable and that they receive all of the palatable, succulent, nutritious food they need for maintaining their bodies in good condition and manufacturing the maximum of milk and butterfat of which they have the inherent ability.

It is not difficult or expensive to remodel most barns so that they will be comfortable, well lighted and well ventilated. By doing so comfort for cows during winter months is insured. It is even less difficult and expensive to provide an abundance of palatable, succulent, nutritious food. All that is needed is a silo full of good silage, an abundance of leguminous hay and concentrates that will form a well balanced ration.

A HOME STUNT WITH WHEEL HOE.

Some time ago I considered the lost motions involved in going over my acre of garden with an ordinary wheel hoe. It was usually necessary to travel the ground once with hoe blades attached to cut up weeds at the surface of the soil, then to change the blades for cultivator teeth and re-travel over the territory to make the ground mellow.

Why didn't the manufacturers provide for a simultaneous attachment of hoe blades and cultivator teeth, so that the two jobs could be done at once? As they didn't, and I decided to amend the deficiency with home resources. It required only two carriage bolts about two and a half inches long, and a piece of common inch board—yellow pine—which I shaped to fit the wheel hoe.

The two bolts were placed tandem about two inches apart, going through the front end of the board and fastening it to the iron frame. For attaching the cultivator teeth it was necessary only to bore three snug holes in the back end of the board and to use the nut-and-bolt fastening regularly provided for the teeth. A coat of linseed oil guaranteed the board against warping.

I have used this combination device for two seasons with entire success. It saves half the time in weed-killing and cultivating.

It is especially useful in the early part of the season, when young weeds are sprouting fast and the surface crust must be kept broken, taking a little more effort to push the machine, but any able-bodied person can manage it. On first-class garden soil, without much clay or stones, you can push it about as fast as you can walk.

Few farmers have such a thing as an extension ladder, and yet that is the best kind of a ladder any one can have. A man who is handy with tools can make one of his own.

Canada will appreciate to an increasing extent that the home market is the best market and that their interests will best be served by the development, along with agriculture, of strong and efficient manufacturing industries.

Grow Your Own Feed

The wise cattle feeder will grow upon his own land the largest possible amount of food that he is to feed. He will grow as much of the nitrogenous feeds, the clover, peas, etc., as possible, but the corn plant or roots will be his mainstay for succulent winter food. Under favorable circumstances he may grow enough to carry his stock but for the most part of the home-grown foods must be supplemented from the market. To do this most economically the man who has sufficient hay and silage for his animals will usually need to lay special stress on the protein content of the feeding stuffs that he is to buy.

While protein is not the sole measure of a food material, for his purpose he can consider it as such, for he goes to the market not to buy sugar and starch but to obtain the nitrogenous materials needed to balance his ration. Hence he will have little use for low grade oat feeds, he will buy bran chiefly because it will furnish needed manurial matter, and he will buy more largely of the gluten, the oil meal, and other materials high in protein. Which of these that he purchases will be largely determined by the market price. Under ordinary conditions he will probably find cotton seed meal to be the cheapest source of digestible protein, particularly when its high manurial value is taken into account.

SOME GOOD ADVICE.

Buy all the good females you can pay cash for. Use a bull that is worth as much as half the females he serves in a season. You can afford to use your credit some on him if necessary.

Care for them each and all as one usually cares for a top notch, new automobile or any other pet treasure. Raise what you feed. Feed what you raise. Be loyal to the breed. Help your neighbors to make your community a leading one. Remember that the Lord not only loves a good loser but a modest winner.—Shortborn World.

To get a good crop rotation started is usually not a simple problem, nor can it usually be accomplished in a year.

ELIMINATING THE POOR COW.

The object of cow testing is to give the dairyman accurate knowledge as to the production of milk and fat of each cow in the herd. It is readily admitted that the average cow does not produce as much milk as she is capable of giving, and many dairymen keep one or more cows that do not even pay for their keep. Cow testing shows which cows are worth keeping in the herd and gives evidence against those that should be eliminated from the herd.

"The progress of cow testing," bulletin 58, Dairy and Cold Storage Series by A. H. White, B.S.A., shows that many farmers rely on guess work to pick out their best cows from which to save heifer calves for the future herds. Frequently, these guesses are not correct, cows which have good conformation are not always the best producers in the herd. Dairy Records will do away with guess work, and the farmer can safely select his best cows for breeding purposes. The bulletin, "The Progress of Cow Testing," may be secured free upon application to the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. In addition to giving the essential objects of cow testing it outlines the details of organization and gives some of the results obtained, which shows that many farmers have increased the production of their herds from 30 to 75 per cent and some have doubled the herd average in a few years. Wherever cow testing has been followed for a few years a decided increase in the average production of each cow will be found.

Alfalfa hay is a splendid horse feed but must be fed with judgment and care. It is not always true to say that there is no "best breed" of sheep or swine or of any other class of live stock. There is a best breed for every man, and that breed is the one that likes best and with which he is most likely to succeed. No matter what class of ewe you keep, use only pure-bred rams.

A horse trader usually looks for the blemishes in the other horse that exist in his own.

CROP ROTATION.

Dr. Griesdale Emphasizes the Necessary Factor of Permanency in Prosperous Agriculture.

"The maintaining of the farm in a condition free from weeds and keeping the moisture-holding power of the land as high as possible are factors that are of prime importance. A crop rotation, therefore, that is satisfactory makes preparations both by getting the soil in right shape and by cultural methods to hold that moisture as well as it possibly can be held, by storing all the moisture that comes along.

"Another advantage in crop rotation is the conservation of the fertility and the maintenance, if not the increasing, of the fibre content of the soil.

"Nearly all farmers are following rotations. They get into the habit of following some kind of a system, and if you are handling some land year after year you are bound to have some rotation, whether you know it or not. Unfortunately we have too many farmers with a bad scheme, a bad rotation. What we want to get introduced on every farm is a good rotation, and what is a good rotation on one farm is not necessarily the best rotation on another. That we appreciate this is shown by the fact that we have on trial on our experimental farms some twenty-odd rotations in the West. "I think the most important step in progression to be made on these prairies is the introduction of a better rotation. We have a rotation now, but it is a bad one. What we want to do is to change it and put a better one in, and that is what we are trying to reach at this Conservation meeting. If we could get that change—if we could get the farmers of this country thinking along that line, the changing from that three-year rotation in the West or four-year in the eastern part of these prairies, including a summer-fallow in each case, and considering all the possibility of our hoes or cultivated crop, we shall have done more for agriculture in these provinces than any other convention or meeting of men has ever done in the history of the Prairies."—From address of Dr. J. H. Griesdale, at Conference on Soil Fertility of the Commission of Conservation at Winnipeg.

FOR PEACH TREE BORERS.

Peach borers may be controlled only by cutting them out of their burrows in June and again in the fall. Repellent washes, mechanical barriers and poison sprays have not been effective in controlling the pest.

Two species attack the peach tree. The lesser borers are usually found in the diseased and wounded areas of the upper part of the trunk where they feed on the growing bark. The common borers confine their attacks to the base of the tree.

Both species may be cut out at the same time, but the wounds made by the worming should be painted with lime-sulphur solution, Bordeaux mixture of white lead, to prevent diseases from entering the wounds.

Apparatus has been invented that records the speed made by a locomotive at each point in a run, where it stops and how long and where it is reversed.

A species of spider in Cayton spins webs five feet in diameter and with supporting lines ten or more feet long, strong enough to trap birds for food.

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