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ORCHARD AND GARDEN NOTES

February 1-8

Portulaca is one of the best annuals to plant in a hot, sunny place. It does well in light soil if it has sunlight.

Bring up some of the bulbs from the cellar. They should furnish flowers for a larger part of the spring months.

If cosmos is used, get early varieties. The late sorts must be started early and even then do not always flower.

Write for catalogs and get the seed list made up and ordered. It will soon be time to plant early vegetable and flower seed.

The annual poppies are splendid to plant in wild corners. They grow easily and are not particular as regards soil so long as they have plenty of sunlight.

Don't throw away the old bulbs after they have flowered. As soon as the ground can be worked, plant them in the shrubbery or garden. You will get some flowers from them again, but they should not be forced.

Branches of pussy-willow and of some of the early-flowering plants, if brought into the house or greenhouse and put in water, will bloom very quickly. It is well to spray the twigs often to prevent their drying too fast.

Manure-water may be used to advantage on plants just coming into bud. It is made by suspending a sack of cow or sheep manure in water until the water becomes the color of strong tea. Commence by giving a small amount at a time.

What is there about your farmstead that makes it different from those in the same vicinity? Is it the well planted lawn, painted buildings, and general air of thrift about the place, or is it the unpainted buildings, broken machinery in the yard, and a general appearance of carelessness and waste? Now is a good time to set plans in motion for better farmsteads. An attractive place is a splendid advertisement for the owner and the community.—Le Roy Cady, Associate Horticulturist, University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota.

ORCHARD AND GARDEN NOTES

February 8-15

Seed of pansies and other early flowers may be sown now and the plants transplanted as soon as large enough.

Plant a few currants, gooseberries, and raspberries this spring. They are easy to care for and will repay any one.

Cuttings of geraniums, begonias, coleus, and other bedding plants may be struck now, and rooted in moist sand. Some of these plants often root well in water in the kitchen.

Order a collection of zinnia seed. They may be planted in cold frames and late transplanted in the open. They do not yield good cut flowers, but are good as bedding plants.

Far-sighted gardeners purchase seed of plants, such as lettuce, cabbage, and cauliflower, a year or two in advance and try some of it in the field in order that they may know what crop to expect when the seed is used.

Good seed is an important matter with the gardener as well as the farmer. It never pays to buy cheap seed. Experiments were carried on a year or two ago by the Pennsylvania Experiment Station with some ten or more strains of cabbage seed of the same varieties from different firms. They found variations of yield from 5 to 10 or 15 tons an acre, according to the strain of seed. The seed of the highest quality meant several dollars more to the acre in net returns, even if it did cost a few cents more a pound.—LeRoy Cady, Associate Horticulturist, University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Doctor and the Farmer's Wife

Dr. Clarence J. Blake of Boston tells the following story:

A farmer's wife was found too run down from overwork to respond to treatment. She told him that she and her young daughter did all the farm house work for a family consisting of her husband, two hearty sons and two hired men. "And sometimes when I go to bed at night and think over what's on hand that must be used tomorrow and what will keep over and what must be cooked and bought and all the rest I just wish that my folks could have their victuals made up into an 'intement-an' rubbed into 'em.'"—Journal of Home Economics.

GERMS CAN'T TRAVEL ON THE FIRING-LINE

Trenches are healthier than barracks or camps for soldiers, so far as infectious diseases are concerned. Despite the hardships, cold, exposure, irregular meals, strain of nerves, and other wholly unhygienic conditions, infectious diseases are usually at a minimum, on the firing line, so says Colonel Valery Harvard, of the United States Medical Corps. Dr. H. W. Hill of the Minnesota Public Health Association explains this seeming paradox.

In the barracks and camps the soldiers have wide intercourse with each other, and with civilians, thus picking up whatever infectious diseases are going about. Despite regular life, good meals, discipline, and sanitation, the infectious diseases attack them. But in the trenches they are comparatively isolated, and since infected soldiers are not allowed there, those on the firing line have little chance to become infected at all. Such injuries as cold, starvation, strain can produce are, of course, suffered, but infectious diseases are not included in this list. Parallel cases in civil life are not uncommon, and everyone knows of families who live like pigs, yet are never sick, while other families living under apparently the best conditions are more or less constantly infected with one epidemic disease after another. Careful investigation always shows that the former escape, because they do not happen to be exposed to infection.

BETTER NURSING IS NEEDED IN THE HOME

"Skillful home nursing is a great blessing," says Dr. H. W. Hill of the Minnesota Public Health Association. "Everyone wishes that every mother might be a skilled nurse, for such services are required at least three to four times by each child for serious infections as well as for many minor troubles. But skillful nursing in the home is beyond most mothers, despite all loving desire to do the best for their sick ones. "When actual knowledge of the care of really sick persons is needed, and especially where infectious cases are concerned, not only is the average mother's training insufficient for the patient's best welfare, but lack of practice as well as inexperience tells heavily on the mother in her efforts to prevent the spread of infection to others. A trained nurse is invaluable in such cases, but even better is it that the sick one should be removed to a hospital. This is especially true for the patient suffering from tuberculosis and avoids danger to the other members of the family as well."

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS USUALLY INHERITED

"Disease may affect the best as well as the worst of the race, but feeble-mindedness is generally hereditary, and can be prevented only by the prevention of transmission from parent to child," says Dr. H. W. Hill of the Minnesota Public Health Association.

"It is true that feeble-mindedness is sometimes brought on by illness or accident. Such cases, constituting perhaps one-third of the total, are not transmitted to the offspring. But the other two-thirds of all the feeble-mindedness we have is hereditary, and can be traced back generation after generation. It runs in distinct strains through the human race, just as speed is peculiar to certain breeds of horses. The feeble-minded are the greatest contributors to our stock of criminals, prostitutes, tramps, and undesirables. All told they do not constitute more than two or three per cent of the population.

GUERNSEY BREEDERS FORM STATE ASS'N

The Guernsey breeders of the State formed the Minnesota Guernsey Breeders' Association at a meeting held at University Farm, Thursday, January 7, 1915. More than one hundred were in attendance and officers were elected as follows: President Dr. M. D. Wood, Mankato; vice president, R. A. Wilkinson, Lake Elmo; secretary and treasurer, George P. Grout, Duluth.

The newly formed association made plans to promote the interests of the Guernsey breeders of the State in every way possible. As a preliminary step it was decided that a booth should be maintained at the Minnesota State Fair next fall.

Do not order many novelties unless you have time to take care of them and can afford to be disappointed in their behavior. Novelties are often of value and interesting, but are too expensive to plant for main-crop flowers or vegetables as a rule.

WORK AND PLAY FOR JUNIOR WEEK

The Minnesota Junior Week for the boys and girls interested in farming and farm homes will be held this year from April 5 to 10. The program will include certain interesting talks, demonstrations, and excursions.

"The mornings will be devoted to class and practice work," declares George F. Howard, rural school worker of the Agricultural Extension Division of the University of Minnesota.

"The girls will devote themselves chiefly to sewing, bread-making, canning, and other branches of domestic science. The boys will study the growing of corn and the raising of hogs, in preparation for future contest work. Instruction will also be given in dairy and beef cattle, horses, poultry, gardening, and potato growing.

"The afternoons will be devoted to trips to points of interest in and around Minneapolis and St. Paul, the State capitol, State prison at Stillwater, the flour mills, Walker art gallery, South St. Paul stock yards and Minnehaha Falls. Special evening entertainments will be given in Assembly Hall.

"The charges for the week are only \$2 for board and room, and about \$1 for street car fare."

BOYS CONTESTS AT FARM CROPS SHOW

Contests in corn and stock judging will be among the features of the Farm Crops Show of the Minnesota Red River Valley Development Association, to be held in Crookston about the middle of February. The contests will take place at the Northwest School of Agriculture, of the University of Minnesota, February 16, beginning at 9:30 a. m.

The corn judging contest will be open to all high and graded schools of equal rank, embraced by the territory of the Minnesota Red River Valley Development Association. F. L. Kennard, Agronomist of the Northwest School and Station, has been named manager of the senior contest. T. M. McCall, Horticulturist of the same institution, has been named manager of the junior contest. These managers will have full charge on the day the contests are held. The names of members of the Judging Committees follow:

Senior contest—C. P. Bull, Minnesota College of Agriculture, St. Paul; C. E. Brown, Extension Division, Minnesota College of Agriculture; O. I. Bergh, North Central Experiment Station, Grand Rapids.

Junior contest—F. E. Balmer, Extension Division, Minnesota College of Agriculture; P. E. Clement, County Agent, Clay County; C. R. Billings, County Agent, Wilkin County.

Further information in relation to this contest may be had on application to H. E. Wolfe, Chairman of the corn judging contest committee, East Grand Forks.

Stock-Judging

The stock judging contest will be open to students of high school agricultural departments attending schools within the territory of the Development Association.

William Dietrich, Head of the Dairy and Animal Husbandry Department of Northwest Experiment Station, Crookston, has been named Manager of the Stock Judging Contest and will have full charge on Feb. 16. The committees for this contest are as follows:

Dairy Cattle—C. P. Grout, Duluth; E. C. Schroeder, Moorhead; A. R. Knutson, County Agent, Polk County.

Beef Cattle and Swine—W. H. Peters, Fargo; William Dietrich, Northwest School of Agriculture; Thomas H. Canfield, Lake Park.

Horses and Sheep—W. A. McKerron, Extension Division, College of Agriculture; B. A. Gray, County Agent, Norman County; R. T. Buckler, Crookston.

For added information application should be made to Henry Warner, chairman of the committee, at Thief River Falls.

Liberal Prizes

The Minnesota Red River Valley Development Association in cooperation with the executive committee of the Development Association is offering liberal prizes for these contests.

STATE SEED LAW PAYS FOR STUDY

It is the intention of the Minnesota seed law to assist the farmer in his seed purchases. Many farmers are not acquainted with the provisions of this law. An evening or two could be spent profitably becoming acquainted with the Minnesota Seed Law, and its operations. A copy of this law will be sent by the Minnesota Seed Laboratory, University Farm, St. Paul, on application.

FEBRUARY, MONTH TO PREPARE SEED

February is the month when all seed to be sown next spring should be made ready, says W. L. Oswald, in charge of the seed laboratory, University farm, St. Paul. How should this be done? First, all seed should be thoroughly cleaned and graded so that only the best and strongest seeds are saved for sowing. Second, after the seed is thoroughly cleaned and graded it should be tested for germination. Third the seed should also be examined as to purity so as to find out whether there are any seeds of noxious weeds present, such as quack grass, Canada thistle, or sow thistle.

The Minnesota Seed Laboratory will gladly test all samples of seed for purity and germination. These tests are made free of charge. In sending samples be sure that they are representative samples of the lot which you wish to have tested, and address same to Seed Laboratory, University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota.

BUY SEEDS EARLY; GET THEM TESTED

Many farmers every year buy a large part of their seed. It is a common mistake for many to wait until the last minute before they make their purchases. This does not give them any time to test their seed as to purity and germination. Buyers of seed should buy by sample only, then send samples to the Minnesota Seed Laboratory, University Farm, St. Paul, and have them tested. Samples of bulk seed should also be sent to the Laboratory later to see whether they correspond with the samples. This all makes it advisable not to wait too long before buying seed for spring sowing.

BROME GRASS IS MADE SAFER CROP

Robert C. Dahlberg, Seed Analyst at the Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Minnesota, has solved an agricultural problem of great importance to the farmers of Minnesota.

Brome grass is a valuable forage in Minnesota, but on account of the fact that with brome grass seed was often found quack grass seed, and other seeds of very similar nature which could not be distinguished from quack grass seed, farmers quite generally ceased to plant brome grass.

Mr. Dahlberg's discovery makes it possible to distinguish quack grass from kindred grass seeds less harmful. Consequently brome grass seed may be tested at the Minnesota Seed Laboratory, University Farm, St. Paul, without danger of its being condemned for appearing to contain quack grass seed, when in reality it may have a mixture of harmless kindred seeds only, such as western wheat-grass and slender wheat grass.

Mr. Dahlberg's identification of the seeds of quack grass, western wheat grass, and slender wheat-grass was originally published by the Journal of Agricultural Research, and has now been reprinted in separate form. The reprint is valuable to scientists but the publication of the treatise has a value to the farmer because it will serve as a guide to seed laboratories in testing brome grass seed and prevent the possibility of condemning such seed because of the possible presence of quack grass when the seed may contain only western wheat-grass or slender wheat-grass.

CARBON BISULPHIDE WILL KILL WEEVILS

There are several insects, commonly called "weevils," which attack beans, flour, breakfast food, and other cereal products in the house. An effective method of controlling them is to fumigate with carbon bisulphide. Place the material to be fumigated in an air-tight box or barrel, and after pouring the carbon bisulphide into a shallow dish, place it on top. The bisulphide evaporates rapidly and the fumes will sink downward destroying the weevils. Use two or three pounds of carbon bisulphide to every one thousand cubic feet of space in the fumigation box, or in these proportions.

The gas is explosive so care should be used not to take lights near receptacle. Two or three heavy blankets may be thrown over the top of a box to keep the fumes in when no other cover is available.

A thorough cleaning of pantry or storeroom should precede fumigation. All material too badly infested for use should be burned. The spraying of cracks with gasoline will also be a help.

FARMERS' WEEK TO BE COUNTRY LIFE CONFERENCE

The success of Farmers' and Home-Makers' Week at University Farm, St. Paul, January 4-9, 1915, when more than 600 men and women were registered for study and conferences, indicates that Minnesota is to have a great annual mid-winter country life conference.

C. P. Craig, chairman of the Minnesota Efficiency and Economy Commission, at a dinner attended by Twin City business men and representatives of the Department of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota, at the close of Farmers' Week, made the prediction that future Farmers' Weeks would bring together from 2000 to 4000 representative people of the State for study and the consideration of rural life problems.

What Mr. Craig sees as a possible development of Farmer's Week, is believed in by many of those who kept in touch with the work done through the Week this year.

The closing meeting, at which Mr. Craig spoke, was one of great enthusiasm. Dean A. F. Woods of the College of Agriculture, presided and called upon several county agents and workers for better agriculture for five minute talks. Every talk was of the rapid-fire, bulls-eye-hitting kind.

Among the county agents called on were R. C. Palmer, Blue Earth County; P. E. Clement, Clay County; D. B. Jewell, Koochiching County; and A. L. Norling, Grant County. Each of these men told of some special line of effort pursued with success in his county. F. E. Balmer, assistant leader of county agents, followed with a summary, illustrated with maps, showing results obtained by the State's 27 county agents on the spread of alfalfa, the increased acreage of corn, the building of silos, and so on. R. S. Mackintosh outlined the short course system of the Extension Division of the College of Agriculture, which system this year includes 35 towns and villages.

A. D. Wilson, Director of the Agricultural Extension Division of the University of Minnesota, then outlined in brief, the whole scheme of taking the college to the farmer. He placed special emphasis on the farmer's clubs, showing that from the 900 clubs of the State, 70,000 persons met each month for social, educational, and business purposes. Thomas Cooper, Director of Experiment Stations in North Dakota, told how, under the stimulus given to the live-stock industry, shipments had increased six-fold between 1911 and 1914. Horace M. Hill, of Minneapolis, spoke as the representative of the Twin City business men present. C. G. Schulz, State superintendent of public instruction, and Senator R. E. Potter of Springfield, were also on the program.

Following all these speakers came Mr. Craig, with a summarizing of the agricultural educational agencies of the State and his approval of the system.

President Vincent placed the capstone with the statement that we were growing something besides farm crops in Minnesota, and that was a crop of good will. The community spirit was spreading, the organization of 900 farmers' clubs meant that things would happen. There might be friction and strain as a result, but good will was going to rule in the home, in the community, in the commonwealth.

AUTOMOBILES ARE "BALKY" IN WINTER

Automobiles are harder to manage in winter than in summer. They need more attention. J. L. Mowry, of the Division of Agricultural Engineering, University Farm, has put together a few suggestions that the automobile owner or driver will do well to keep in mind.

For use in the radiator, mix one part alcohol, one part glycerine, and four parts water. This will stand 15 degrees of subzero weather and not freeze. One part alcohol and two parts water is a cheaper mixture and will stand the same amount of cold. Denatured alcohol should be used. Calcium chloride should be avoided. It is hard on the metal parts and leaves a deposit wherever it falls. Alcohol should be added to the mixtures prescribed, from time to time, in order to make up for evaporation.

Lubricants for the differential and transmission gears should be thinned with good machine oil in winter. Heavy grease will remain stiff and allow the gears to run dry. Care in driving is more necessary in winter than in summer. Springs and steering knuckles will snap much more readily in cold weather.

If storage batteries are used for lighting or starting, they should be kept well charged. Cold retards the activity of a cell and it will not give power enough to turn the engine unless it is well charged. If a car stands a week or two unused, and the weather gets to 10 or 15 degrees below zero, the battery should be slipped out and taken to a warm place.