

# SEED CORN TIME

## 1926

Minnesota has approximately 18 millions of acres under cultivation. Of this area about one-fourth is planted to corn each year. On the basis of eight pounds of first class seed per acre for corn raised for grain and up to 20 pounds per acre for corn raised for silage and fodder, there will be needed approximately three-fourths of a million bushels of seed for planting in the spring of 1927.

The scarcity of good seed corn the spring of 1926, and the consequent high prices that growers who were short of seed were forced to pay, emphasize the importance of saving now an ample supply of high grade seed for planting next year.

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## **Use Seed of Acclimated Strains**

Maturity under average conditions before killing frosts in the fall is of first importance in securing high yields of good quality corn. To get mature corn under such average conditions before killing frosts, it is necessary to plant seed of an acclimated strain of a variety known to mature in the section of the state in which it is to be grown.

The varieties recommended by the Agricultural Experiment Station have been tested and have shown their ability to produce comparatively high yields of mature corn in carefully conducted trials.

## **Recommended Varieties**

Southern section: On the most productive lands, Silver King and Murdock. On less productive lands, Minn. No. 13 and Rustler.

Central section: Minn. No. 13 and Rustler.

Northern section: For dry corn production: Flint varieties—Dakota White, Gehu, Pearl; Dent varieties—Northwestern Dent, Minn. No. 23, and northern grown strains of Minn. No. 13.

If the variety of corn now being grown by any farmer matures at about the right time

and is a fairly vigorous high yielding strain, it will pay to select seed from it. If it matures too late or too early in an average season or has a high percentage of weak plants, it will be better to secure the right kind of seed from some grower with similar conditions.

It is highly important that careful attention be given to the strain of the variety used as well as to the variety itself. Seed of a strain of Minnesota No. 13 or any other variety of corn that matures satisfactorily in central Minnesota should not be planted in northern Minnesota with the expectation of securing a mature crop of corn. Likewise a strain of Minnesota No. 13 that has been selected over a period of years to mature in northern Minnesota is not satisfactory for planting in southern Minnesota, as it matures too early to make full use of the growing season and hence yields less than a strain selected throughout a period of years for use in the southern part of the state.

### **Selecting Seed Corn**

The best selection of seed corn can be made only when the plants that produce the ears are taken into consideration as well as the ears themselves. Ears should be selected

only from strong, vigorous, upright plants growing in full stand hills surrounded by hills having a normal stand. Plants maturing considerably earlier than the others and often partly lodged are apt to be diseased and are best avoided.

Selection of seed corn, taking the plant into consideration, can be made to best advantage in a normal year at the time the husks are turning yellow and the leaves and stems are still green. At this stage of development the kernels are generally fairly well dented. If for any reason the maturity of the corn is delayed, it is necessary to select the seed ears in the dough stage or still earlier in order to get them where they are safe from harm before continued killing frosts occur. Light frosts do not damage the corn, but serve as indications that the seed ears should be removed from the field promptly before more severe freezing causes serious injury. In emergencies, seed corn may be selected as early as in the roasting ear stage with good results providing it is properly cured.

Select comparatively smooth ears with kernels of medium depth. This is desirable in all sections of the state from the standpoint

of securing the highest yields of mature corn.

Select a large enough number of ears so that 25 to 50 per cent of them may be discarded later if necessary and still sufficient seed be available. If practically all of the ears selected in the field prove satisfactory some seed will be available for the following year. Carrying a reserve supply of seed corn from one year to the next is an excellent practice. A bushel of good seed is sufficient for seven acres of corn planted for grain. Of the larger varieties suitable to southern Minnesota, 100 to 125 ears should provide a bushel of shelled seed corn. From 150 to 200 ears of the smaller varieties grown in northern Minnesota is about the right amount to select to provide a bushel of well graded seed corn.

### **Curing Seed Corn**

A curing place that can be opened up during drying weather to secure free circulation of air and closed when freezing weather threatens is desirable for curing. The ears should be either laid on suitable racks or hung so there is free circulation. Ordinarily artificial heat is not necessary to cure properly, but if used it should be moderate

in amount, particularly at first when the corn has a high moisture content.

### **Storing**

After the ears are thoroughly air dried, they may be moved together, so they will occupy less space, and stored in any location where they will remain dry. Ordinary winter temperatures do not injure thoroughly cured seed corn.

### **Testing**

It is always advisable to make a general test of the germinating power of the seed corn along about the latter part of March before it is shelled. To do this remove two or three kernels from 50 ears lying in different places in the storage room and test. If the germination is high and the young plants are strong, no further testing is necessary. If the germination is poor, an ear test is necessary so as to be able to locate and discard the ears that are not satisfactory. Full directions for making the ragdoll test of seed corn are contained in Special Bulletin No. 101, Agricultural Extension Division, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.

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