

Professor Massey's Editorial Page.

The Joy of Making a Garden.

DID YOU EVER make a garden from a piece of bare ground? There is lots of fun in it. I am doing this very thing now, and I take a great deal of pleasure in the work, and try to do it all myself, for one takes more pride in his own work than that which he hires done. I bought a dwelling with a lot fronting 50 feet on one street and running back 150 feet on another. This lot I wanted to make ornamental with lawn and shrubbery and a few fruit trees and grape vines. But I wanted a kitchen garden, and right alongside was another lot of the same size.

I am out within one block of the city limits, and there are vacant lots all around. I can remember when I could have bought all the land around me for \$10 an acre before the city spread out this way. But now I paid at the rate of \$3,000 an acre for that vacant lot alongside of me and every one thinks I got it very cheap. A pretty high-priced garden, but never going to be worth any less, and it is to be a real garden.

I covered it all over with stable manure from New York that cost \$3 a ton on the ground, and I am adding a high-grade fertilizer. This land has been used in truck gardens for years, and is a good sandy soil with a little way down a clay so hard that only a pick will touch it. Hence it retains moisture finely.

I hastened to get some peas in in February and some early beets, and then the neighbors' hens began to cultivate it for me. So I had to make a fence of poultry wire all around it. This fence is not pretty, but is substantially built with a 2 x 4 scantling along the top and a base-board to prevent the hens from scratching under. At the north end and outside the west side, I have planted some peach trees and plum trees to make fruit and act as a wind-break to the garden. And all along one side I have planted eleven sorts of grapes. Along the front fence next the street I have sweet peas to make it look well for a time, and am going to put clematis and Crimson Rambler roses there for permanent adornment. Then back on the sunny side of the barn I have a frame covered with glass sashes in which tomato plants have been transplanted and will soon go out into the garden, and in another frame I have lots of flower seed sown and growing. I have hundreds of dahlias coming on from seed, for one can grow a dahlia to bloom from seed almost as soon as from the roots, and it is fun to see how they turn out in the flowers. On one side the dwelling, along the porch that runs around two sides, I have a shrubbery border in which I have planted thirty varieties of blooming shrubbery, including white and pink crepe myrtles and a wistaria to climb on the porch. The wire fence in the kitchen garden will be utilized to a great extent for my lima beans and will save poles. On the north end I have the tall Champion of England peas to run on the fence, and on part of the west side where there are no grape vines I shall have the climbing nasturtiums.

I do not want a mere truck patch, and hence have made borders around the inside of the fences for radishes, late cabbage plants, mustard, etc., and a walk all around and one across the garden, making two blocks or squares. The tall-growing things will be kept at the north end so as not to shut out the sunshine from the lower-growing plants that are to the south. The early peas will soon be in bloom, and will be followed by the Champion of England. Beets are up thickly, and I will have lots of thinnings to transplant. The early corn, Tait's Early, has been planted, and a succession will be kept up of sugar corn. Tait's Early is not a sugar corn, but is early, and will be followed by the Country Gentleman sweet corn and Stowell's Evergreen.

Onions I have, of course, and now that April is bringing us a little rain, and the weather continues hot, I shall now try some snaps outside. April 4th is early in this latitude for snaps. My tomato plants that have been once transplanted in the frames will be stout, and short plants and not the leggy sort one sees from thickly sown beds. They will go out about the middle of the month, and I hope to have ripe fruit before the end of June. My early cabbages will this season be

really a succession crop, as I did not own the land last fall and could not plant them. Another season I hope to have some cauliflowers, too, but it is too late to set them now, as the hot weather would catch them before heading. Okra, of course, I shall have, and salsify and parsnips and rhubarb and asparagus, and the chard or asparagus beet.

Few people in the South grow chard, but it is one of the finest things in the garden. It is a kind of beet, but the root is not the part eaten. We eat the stems of the leaves cooked like asparagus, and they can be pulled all summer, and any one who has a garden should plant some chard.

Then we like sage for sausages in the fall, and I have sown a lot of sage seed, for I do not want old sage bushes in the garden. The seed were sown on a border, and will be transplanted where the peas are now, and will cover the ground by fall, and the sage can be cut and dried, as it will all be tender. Then I shall sell the plants to those who want sage bushes, and shall sow seed again next spring, for I can make more sage from seed than by keeping old plants in the garden to be weed harbors. Then as fast as one crop is out of the way, I shall plant something else in its place and keep the garden clean.

My tomato plants will be set three feet by two feet, and trained to single stems on stakes, as I can get more and earlier fruit in this way. Then I shall spray them with Bordeaux mixture to prevent rot and leaf blight. Fortunately, we do not have the Southern wilt here, and the farmers all around are contracting tomatoes to the canning houses at \$7 a ton. There are over fifty canning houses in this county, putting up green peas, corn and tomatoes. They sow Alaska peas broadcast and mow them when filled, and the machines at the canning houses shell them from the vines and the refuse is hauled back for feed. I shall tell more about my garden during the summer.

Too Many Hands Between Producer and Consumer.

THE FACT THAT the grower and shipper of vegetables gets so small a part of what the consumer pays for them is a matter that interests all Southern shippers. Much of this loss is caused by rascally commission men. Many years ago my first shipment of winter head lettuce went to a man in Baltimore who reported sale of it that netted me about one cent a head. I found out a few days later that one consumer bought some of that very lettuce and paid 20 cents a head for it. My next shipment went to another merchant who kindly let me net 75 cents per dozen.

The best way out of this is the organization of the selling exchanges that are now so successful in Virginia and Maryland. If compelled to ship to a commission merchant, look into his commercial rating and his character for honest dealing, and never ship to a man who tells you he can get better prices than other competing merchants. He may get better prices at times, but you will not get them.

It would seem that the "home hamper" of assorted vegetables shipped direct to consumers should be a means for the grower and consumer to get nearer together. If the trucker would advertise in the city papers, saying that he will send such and such amounts of vegetables assorted in carriers direct to consumers at a fixed price, I believe that a good private trade could be built up in this way, cash in advance always being required. One customer well pleased would soon lead to more. Growers, as a rule, are too much afraid of printers' ink. There is nothing equal to advertising to make one and his business known.

The editor of the Practical Farmer tells a correspondent that the Southern cowpeas and oats do excellently together. I wonder if he has ever tried sowing oats in June or cowpeas in February? The two can not be made to mix, and it is a pity that some editors do not know more about the crops they advise about.

Mr. C. F. Ames says: "The average cost of a wage hand for one year is about the same as the first cost of a good mule. At the end of the year you own the mule, but not the wage hand." Paste that in your hat.

Double the Corn Crop.

THERE IS NO DOUBT, as Dr. Butler intimates, that, as a rule, the farmers in the South do not have stalks enough on the land to make a large crop. One stalk in a hill five or six feet apart can not make a large crop no matter how fertile the soil. The notion has been that as corn grows tall in the South it must have more room for air. The true method is, to breed the corn by selection to a lower stature, and not by stunting it in its early growth. I have tried checking corn on level land, and I feel sure that on any land I can make more corn in rows with stalks 18 to 20 inches apart than by crowding two or three stalks in a hill and working both ways. And the man who works both ways and follows the old plan of banking the earth to the corn with a plow, will cut more roots all around than the one who follows the same practice in drill rows.

I was in a field last fall that was checked each way and two stalks in the hill. The crop was nearly 100 bushels an acre, but I believe that on the same land, with the same intelligent cultivation that corn had, there would have been over 100 bushels made from a continuous drill row with the same number of stalks. This is assuming that the early cultivation will be with harrow and weeder and hoe work saved.

Fertilizers and Fertility.

SMR. MILLER suggests, the man who applies only 200 pounds of 8-2-2 fertilizer to his land is only enabling the crop to draw more on the natural fertility of his soil, and the crops sold off have carried away this fertility and the land is poorer than before the fertilizer was applied. But the man who applies an equal money value of phosphoric acid and potash to a crop of crimson clover to be turned for corn not only gives the phosphoric acid and potash to the corn, but more nitrogen than a ton of the poor 8-2-2 carries, for in the 200 pounds of 8-2-2 he does not apply 4 pounds of nitrogen, but 3.4 pounds, for the 2 per cent on the sack is ammonia and not nitrogen, and ammonia is only about 85 per cent nitrogen, and the farmer buys this when he could get more than twenty times as much free by growing crimson clover as a winter cover to his soil and a nitrogen-fixer for his corn or cotton.

Fake Advertisers.

IT IS SADLY true that the worst fakes and patent medicine humbugs are to be found in the advertising columns of the church papers. I picked up a paper a few days ago that is published by one of the largest church organizations in this country in behalf of the missionary work of the church, and the editor said that the paper is getting on a better financial basis because of the increase in the advertising. I looked at the advertising columns, and fully 90 per cent of the ads in that missionary paper were pure fakes. The editors of the religious papers, generally lacking in worldly wisdom, are more easily imposed upon than any other class of papers, and all the fakes know that they are "easy." And they know, too, that it is useless to try to get into the pages of The Progressive Farmer and Gazette.

THE FOLLY OF COMPOSTING.—With the exception of manure for truck crops, I do not believe in composting. It is all well to use some acid phosphate with the manure, but I would then at once haul it as fast as made and spread it where crops are to be planted. It is safer there than anywhere else. The practice of composting has grown up from the scarcity of manure by too little cattle feeding and the putting of the compost only in the furrows for cotton. The best way to improve the land is to grow plenty of good forage and feed to cattle and then spread the manure on a crimson clover sod to be turned under for corn, and to spread it there as fast as made whenever you can get on the land.

There would be no trouble from the cotton root-lice if tobacco stems are used in the furrow. Tobacco is the sovereign preventive of all forms of plant aphides on root or top. Where the lands are infested with the root-lice, try tobacco stems from the factories, and my word for it, you will have no root-lice.