

★ FRUIT, TRUCK AND VEGETABLES ★

COVER CROPS FOR ORCHARDS.

Sow Cowpeas in the Orchard at Once, to be Followed in the Fall by Rye or Crimson Clover.

In most cases orchards are located on the more elevated land, which is hilly or rolling, with sandy soil and clay subsoil. On such soil it is hard to prevent surface washing entirely, but it could be reduced to the minimum by the proper use of cover crops. Not only do these cover crops prevent surface washing, but they utilize the soluble fertilizers which would otherwise leach out of the soil. When the crop is turned under, it adds considerable humus to the soil and the fertilizers required to produce it become available for the use of the trees.

The plants used as cover crops are of two distinct types, leguminous and non-leguminous plants. The legumes, such as clover, cowpeas and vetch, in addition to furnishing humus, have the power of collecting nitrogen from the air for the use of other plants. The non-leguminous plants, such as rye, oats and turnips, do not collect nitrogen from the air, but when sown in the early fall consume soluble plant food during their growth, which would otherwise be lost by leaching and which is returned to the soil when the cover crop is plowed under in the spring. Most soils where orchards are planted are deficient in both humus and nitrogen and, therefore, a leguminous cover crop should be selected. If the trees make sufficient growth without the use of nitrogenous fertilizers, then a non-leguminous crop may be planted.

To add nitrogen and humus to the soil and to prevent surface washing we should have both a winter and summer cover crop. Rye, followed by cowpeas, will give best results on poor soil. The rye should be sown in the early fall in order that it may cover the ground as soon as possible and prevent surface washing. The rye should be turned under not later than the last of March. This may be accomplished by double harrowing with the disk harrow, and this method is preferable to plowing as it avoids the danger of plowing too deep near the trees. A strip of land six to ten feet wide between the rows of trees should be prepared and the peas sown broadcast about the first of May. Early in September the peas should be worked into the soil by means of a disk harrow and the land can be seeded to rye or crimson clover.

After one or two crops of rye and peas have been worked into the soil, crimson clover or hairy vetch may be sown instead of rye. Crimson clover makes an excellent cover crop from September to May. As soon as enough seed have ripened to re-seed itself, the clover should be worked into the soil with a disk harrow. If the clover is allowed to occupy all of the space between the rows of trees during the months of March and April, it will retard the growth of the trees to some extent, and therefore, it is best to turn under the clover early in March. Fertilize and cultivate the trees early in March, leaving a narrow strip of clover in the middle to re-seed itself. A strip two or three feet wide will produce enough seed for the entire middle. After the seed have ripened, the clover is worked into the soil with a disk harrow and the land may be smoothed and the seed scattered over the entire middle by means of a tooth harrow. Hairy vetch is an excellent cover crop and

may be treated in the same way as crimson clover. The seed are sown in August or September and the crop worked into the soil in the spring.

If crimson clover or hairy vetch is to be planted on land where neither of these crops has grown before, it will be necessary to inoculate the field by securing soil from land where vetch and clover have previously grown. This soil may be scattered over the land in the same way as fertilizer, immediately after sowing the seed, and then mixed with the soil and seed by means of a tooth harrow.

Wheat, oats, and barley make good cover crops, but they do not thrive on poor land as well as rye.

In no case should grain be allowed to mature in the orchard as it would rob the trees of moisture and plant food at the very time they need them most.—Press Bulletin, South Carolina Experiment Station.

To Destroy Moles.

Messrs. Editors: To kill moles get a few peanuts—as many as needed—and shell them. In the soft end of each kernel prick out a small opening and in this insert about as much strychnine as the size of half a field pea. Stop up the hole with a crumb of bread. Now find where the mole had last been working, and put a kernel in the run. Just punch a hole with your finger in the run, drop in the peanut, and cover with a chip or piece of bark. Don't mash down the run where you put in the peanut, but on both sides, a foot or two off on both sides, press it down with the foot so you can tell if the mole has been along. Next day visit the place and if you discover that the mashed places have been raised again, either on one side or both, or where you put the peanut, you may be sure it's your mole.

I once had a small strawberry patch infested with moles—every row seemed to be hollow—and I put a peanut in nearly every row, and I got every mole. I tried poisoned pieces of potatoes, poisoned corn and various other things, but nothing did away with the moles till I tried the peanuts. M. L. GUYTON. Rocky Point, N. C.

Use the Weeder Right Now.

Messrs. Editors: Please allow me space in your paper to suggest to the Farmer Family that the weeder is the best farm tool that can be used just now. With frequent and continual use of the weeder all grass and weeds can be destroyed. I have one 20-acre corn patch that is clear of grass and weeds that I have only cultivated three times with the weeder. Will run weeder over corn one or two more times, then will finish with my Planet Jr. cultivator, which I consider the best cultivator ever made for all purposes.

The trouble with most farmers is that they do not prepare for the weeder, therefore they can't use it. I break my land early, as well as I can with two-horse plows, follow with smoothing harrow. In 15 or 20 days, owing to the condition of the weather, I put my 20-inch disk harrow at work, followed by the smoothing harrow again. In this way I thoroughly pulverize my lands before planting, as well as cut all vegetable matters up so they are not in the way of cultivating the crop, but are of real value to the growing crops. Think I shall use a disk plow next winter for breaking land.

With the disk or two-horse plow, disk and smoothing harrow, the

weeder, good cultivator, some 1,100-pound mules, a combination planter of good quality, a herd of Berkshire swine, some pure-bred poultry, with milk and butter for family use and some to spare, and The Progressive Farmer and Gazette as his guide, there is nothing to hinder the Southern farmer from accumulating a surplus. We Southern farmers ought not to have to buy any provisions or feed-stuffs of any kind at all, but have some to sell every month in the year. W. A. SHACKLEFORD.

INJURY TO COTTON BY LATE FROSTS.

Professor Duggar Reports on Conditions in Alabama—Some Lessons to Be Learned From This Season.

Messrs. Editors: The heavy frosts of April 24th and 26th, brought great loss to the South. The principal damage in the Cotton Belt has been to cotton itself. In some localities where a considerable proportion of the young cotton was killed, beans, Irish potatoes, and even tomatoes escaped without injury. Corn, while at first severely set back, has almost invariably survived and only awaits rain to regain its former condition. It suffered worse where the land had recently been cultivated.

In a trip through central Alabama, the writer made an effort to learn the extent to which in different neighborhoods it was necessary to plow up the frosted cotton. This was only about two days after the last killing frost, at which time, of course, a final and positive judgment could not be made. As conditions then appeared, the prospects were not nearly so gloomy as might have been inferred from press reports up to that date. For example, on two plantations where the first expectation was that about half the cotton acreage would need to be plowed up, 10 or 12 per cent of the total area was found to be more accurate. Yet on one of these plantations, with stiff prairie soil, there were single tenant farms where about one-third of the cotton acreage had to be planted again. A sufficiency of seed seemed to be available in most neighborhoods, but the price, 55 cents to \$1 per bushel, worked a hardship.

Of course by the time this is in print the true extent of the damage can be more accurately estimated.

Weather conditions were favorable to recovery in the first week after the frost. First, there were two cloudy days, followed by fair and war? weather, which prevented an extension of the injury to the root system and helped to bring up those seed which were delayed in germinating. However, fair and dry weather continued too long, baking the land and causing unthrifty plants to die. Ten days after the frost found a large part of the cotton of north central Alabama planted over and the country in need of rain.

Can we learn any lessons from the freeze? Certainly a hasty conclusion should not be formed unfavorable to moderately early planting, especially

under boll weevil conditions. The principal lesson, I think, should be the determination of every farmer to save hereafter until after May 1st, double as many good cotton seed as he is likely to need for a single planting of his crop, instead of risking the pains, expense and final disappointment of planting high-priced seed of poor germinating capacity.

Only the harvest season can reveal the extent of the loss due to the use this year of inferior seed for the second planting.

J. F. DUGGAR.

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