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Faxon, M. B.

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Garden Vegetables,

on shell
BY

M. B. FAXON,

BOSTON, MASS.

ESSAY,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Massachusetts Horticultural Society

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GARDEN VEGETABLES.

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GARDEN VEGETABLES.

BY M. B. FAXON, Boston.

It seems as if enough had already been said and written urging every one to have a vegetable garden; but observation will show that not one family in ten does have a garden that is entitled to be called such in every sense of the word. I wish it distinctly understood at the outset that I shall speak of garden vegetables as adapted by their superior culinary qualities for the family table, putting aside, for a moment, the question of the yield, provided the vegetables mentioned are good average croppers; or, in other words, I shall speak of garden vegetables as entirely distinct and separate from those vegetables which are grown to sell. I make this emphatic distinction between vegetables grown for the table and those raised to sell, for the reason that where there is no kitchen garden, and it is the custom to take vegetables for the table (it is not always that this is done, and when it is not the family go without) from farm or market garden crops, as a rule the table is very poorly supplied; for the moment a crop is scarce and brings a good price in the market it is immediately shut off from the raiser's table. But have a separate garden for your table, and do not allow any vegetables whatever to be sold from it, and you will find that you can enjoy green peas the 17th of June, and celery and cauliflowers at Thanksgiving.

A garden containing one acre, and even less space, will amply supply ten persons with all the luxuries of the season; therefore let us take one acre as a basis for the garden we will now consider. Each family can easily plan the size of the garden suited to its needs, by taking this estimate for ten persons as a basis, and planting more or less as they may require.

In order to cultivate vegetables in a satisfactory way, proper attention must be given to the preparation of the soil. Having selected the location, the first step is to see that the ground is properly drained, so that all surplus and stagnant water which may accumulate can pass away freely. After this is effected the ground should be trenched or ploughed as deep as the nature of

the soil will admit and thoroughly enriched with plenty of good barnyard manure. Vegetables can be raised with more or less success on soils of various degrees of richness, but taking the average piece of ground, if from five to ten cords of good barnyard manure is spread broadcast and harrowed in, in the fall, and in the spring from five hundred to a thousand pounds of some good chemical fertilizer is dropped in the rows at the time of planting, there is no reason why a good vegetable garden cannot be had.

A very important point in forming a good garden is to so arrange the planting of the different vegetables, both by a judicious selection of sorts, and also by planting the varieties selected at the proper times, as to secure a succession of the different kinds for the table throughout the season, and not a dozen varieties all together when it is impossible to use more than three or four; or on the other hand having a time come when there is no vegetable whatever fit for the table. Let us now suppose that we have prepared a garden of one acre for planting, and that it is the first of April.

Suppose the piece to be oblong in shape, say 100 feet wide by 436 feet long, which, divided into rows, will give 109 rows, each row (that is, the surface upon which the seeds or plants will be placed) one foot wide and 100 feet long, with three feet between each row, which is ample space for horse cultivation.

I will now mention the varieties of vegetables suitable for the kitchen garden, with short hints for their culture, and at the same time state the number of rows of each vegetable, which should be planted to supply a family of ten persons for one year in an average season. Please remember that our rows are each 100 feet long.

THE BEET. The soil best suited to the beet is a deep, light and rich sandy loam. Early beets should be sown from the 10th to the 20th of April, or as soon as the ground is in good working condition. As soon as the plants are well up they should be thinned to from four to six inches apart. July 1, or perhaps a little earlier, is the proper time to plant for the winter crop; the plants may be left a little closer together, say from two to three inches apart, as, the weather being warmer, they will grow as well at this season as the early ones sown in April do thinned to six inches apart. Cover the seed one inch deep. The Early Bastian and

Dewing's Early Turnip are the standards for both early and late crops. The Early Dark Red Egyptian and the New Eclipse beets are both good varieties for the first early supply, but for winter use no beet has ever yet been produced equal to the Dewing.

Beet-tops make most excellent greens, being very tender, and when cooked are preferred by many to dandelions or spinach. The Swiss chard, or Silver beet, is grown entirely for the tops, and it is a very desirable variety to grow for this purpose, for, as soon as the tops are gathered, they immediately spring up again, and keep growing the entire season without regard to the number of times they are cut down, and on this account it is only necessary to plant a small quantity of this species to supply a large family. Let us have half a row of beets for greens and the rest of this row for our first early supply of the roots; say either Eclipse or Egyptian, and for winter use plant one row of Dewings.

THE CARROT. A good, light and well-enriched sandy loam, which is very finely pulverized, will grow carrots to perfection. For early crops, cover one-half of an inch deep and thin to six inches apart in the row; for late, cover three-quarters of an inch deep and thin to four inches. The earliest is the French Forcing; this is a little round carrot of delicious flavor, and very early. The Early Scarlet Horn is the next in order—a very fine-grained and agreeably flavored vegetable. A good strain of Danvers Half Long is best for general use. Unless an extra quantity is needed, half a row will be found sufficient for flavoring the winter soups and stews.

THE PARSNIP. Parsnips must be sown as soon as possible in the spring. They should be planted in rows, and when well up thinned out to six inches apart. Cultivate in the usual manner during the summer, and when fully grown gather and store the same as any root for winter use.

Parsnips are improved by frost, and it is a usual custom to take up in the fall a certain quantity for winter use, leaving the rest in the ground until spring, to be dug as required.

The Long Smooth White is the favorite for general use. The roots are long and smooth, and it is very productive and a most excellent keeper. Two rows will give us a good yield, for which purpose one-quarter of a pound of seed is wanted.

THE POTATO. No garden can be said to be complete without

its patch of potatoes. As regards the cultivation of the potato I will say very little, as it is a subject by itself; but potatoes are usually planted in drills by dropping the pieces of the cut tubers about ten or twelve inches apart.

Cultivation should commence as soon the young plants are fairly above the surface of the ground, and continued until the appearance of the blossoms, when no further attention will be required until harvesting time. At each successive hoeing gather the earth about the plants, adding a little each time for support, and also to develop the side shoots. When the bugs arrive use Paris green; one or two applications will destroy them. I consider the following varieties the best for general cultivation, and in the order named: Beauty of Hebron, Early Rose, Clark's No. 1 and Pearl of Savoy. The Snowflake potato is without doubt one of the mealiest and best, as far as its edible qualities go, but it is such a shy yielder that I cannot recommend it highly, although I have grown it considerably myself. Potatoes have grown very poorly the past season, and the yield has been very small, as they have rotted badly in all parts of New England, and the result is that they are very high in price. The potato which yielded the best with me (and I may say that it was entirely free from rot) was Bliss's Triumph, and it is a most excellent eating potato; but as this is the first year I have grown it I do not know much about it; yet knowing it to be a variety that has been in the market a long time and is well liked, I think we cannot do better than to grow some of them. I certainly shall do so, for, if I can find a potato that will be free from rot, that is the potato for me to raise. A family of ten persons will consume 50 bushels of potatoes in a year, and, as a good average yield is 150 bushels per acre, it is necessary that one-third of our garden be devoted to this crop.

THE RADISH. The radish will thrive in any good soil, but to be crisp and tender needs to be grown quickly. Sow in drills as soon as the ground is in good working order, and thin out the plants to three inches apart. If a continuous supply is wanted throughout the season, make sowings every ten days to two weeks. The French Breakfast and Early Long Scarlet are both excellent sorts. Half a row, planted at intervals, will be found sufficient.

THE TURNIP. The turnip is propagated from seed and should

be planted where the plants are to remain, as they do not do well when transplanted. For early crops sow as soon as the ground can be made ready in the spring, and thin out to from four to eight inches apart according to the size of the variety. The principal difficulty in planting turnips is that of getting them so thick that it makes a great deal of trouble in thinning. The Swede turnip is planted later—about June 1—while the Purple Top varieties may be planted either early or late, and as late as August 15, a good crop may be secured. The Sweet German turnip is a very desirable sort for winter, as is also Carter's Imperial Swede; the former is white, and the latter yellow. These turnips should be planted from the 10th to the 20th of June for the best results. The Sweet German turnip is commonly known as the Cape turnip, and is raised extensively on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Do not fail to have a plentiful supply of this most excellent vegetable for winter use. At least three rows of turnips of the different varieties should be planted. From the 1st to the 15th of August a great many of our early vegetables have been gathered and the ground is clear; if we plant in these places the Purple Top turnip we shall be able to secure a good crop for fall and winter use without any great amount of labor.

ONIONS FROM SEED. To raise onions from seed it is necessary that the seed should be planted as soon as the ground is in fit condition to work in the spring. Plant in rows, and when well up thin to four inches apart. The onions must be thoroughly cultivated during the growing season, and be kept entirely free from weeds.

There are white, red, and yellow onions; but the yellow ones are the favorites in this section. For New England, the Yellow Globe Danvers onion is the standard. If onions are not strictly fashionable eating, they are at least good, so I think we shall do well to plant three or four rows of them.

ONIONS FROM SETS. Sets are small onions which produce large onions for salads or for the table much earlier than they could be grown from seed. They should be set out about the middle of April, and covered three inches deep. When the tops have died, about the middle of July, the onions should be gathered and spread thinly in a cool, dry place. Sets are especially desirable for small gardens, and for those who wish a few early onions for salads. There are white, yellow, and red onion sets, but the

white ones are by far the best, being of excellent quality and mild flavor. As we want only a few of these early onions before those grown from seed are ready, suppose we set out half a row of sets, and, as these small onions can be set near together, let us make the row a foot wide and set the bulbs four inches apart, thereby having a row of three sets wide. For this purpose two quarts of sets are needed.

ASPARAGUS. Asparagus is a hardy perennial plant. It may be grown from seed or propagated by roots. If grown from seed it will take four years before a good crop can be gathered, after which time a full supply may be expected every season. But the most satisfactory way to establish an asparagus bed is by planting two-year-old roots. These may be purchased at very reasonable rates. These roots should be planted in rows from three to four feet apart, the roots being set one foot apart in the rows, and for depth set the roots so that the crowns shall be from four to six inches below the surface of the ground.

These roots should be set out in the spring. They can be set in the fall, but the spring is the preferable time. It will take two years to obtain a good asparagus bed, if two-year-old roots are used, for the first season after the roots are set out it is not desirable to cut any asparagus from the bed, as the plants need to be given time to become thoroughly established; but in four years from the seed, or in two years from the setting of two-year-old roots, a good asparagus bed can be established. As regards the varieties of asparagus, Conover's Colossal and Moore's Hybrid are both good, but the secret of growing "giant" asparagus lies in the manure heap. As we all like asparagus, let us have three rows of it in our garden, which will take about 400 plants.

THE CUCUMBER. Cucumbers in the open ground should be planted about June 1, in hills six feet apart and thinned to four plants in a hill. Cucumbers are easy to grow if they are given plenty of water. A sprinkling of dry plaster will keep off the striped bug.

The Improved White Spine and Long Green Prickly are the best for the table, while the Boston Pickling is the leading kind for pickles. A dozen hills will supply the needful amount of the table sorts, but as regards the pickles each family must plant according to its needs.

THE MUSKMELON. There is something about every vegetable that makes one think when it comes that it is more desirable than any of its predecessors, and I always feel so when I commence to gather that most delicious fruit, the cantelope melon. The cantelope melon is one of the muskmelon family, and is too well known to need any long description. I will simply say that it should not be planted until the ground is warm, as it is almost as tender as the squash. Plant in hills, and thin out to three or four plants in each hill. When the plants have made four leaves, the ends of the main shoot should be pinched off, which will cause the lateral branches to put forth sooner than otherwise. This will strengthen the growth of the vines, and the fruit will come earlier to maturity. The Arlington, Montreal, and Hackensack, are, I think, three as good cantelope melons as grow. Half a row, or about fifteen hills, will give a good supply.

THE WATERMELON. Watermelons are cultivated the same as muskmelons, but are not grown in this section with equal success, as our seasons are not long enough for them to attain to that perfection which they reach further south. But it will not take much room to try a few hills; so, if our watermelons are not successful, it need be no great loss to us. The Mountain Sweet, Vick's Early, and Phinney's Early Oval are good sorts.

THE SQUASH. The squash is one of our tender annuals, and until all danger from frost is passed it should not be planted, as, owing to the tender nature of the plant, the seed is liable to rot in damp, cool weather. Make the hills eight or nine feet apart, and thoroughly manure them. Place seven or eight seeds in each hill so as to have plenty for the bugs, but as soon as the plants are well up thin out to three plants in each hill.

The bush varieties, such as Summer Crookneck and White Bush Scallop, can be planted nearer together, say six feet apart each way. Press the seeds down firmly before covering, and cover early planted ones an inch deep, and late ones two inches deep. Fine plaster is about as good an article as has yet been found for driving away the bugs. Plant Early Summer Crookneck and White Bush Scallop for summer use, Boston Marrow for fall, and Hubbard, Essex Hybrid, and American Turban for winter. Be sure and gather the crop before it is nipped by frost, if you wish your squashes to keep well. A dozen hills of the

summer kinds will be enough, but quite a quantity of the fall and winter sorts should be planted—say five or six rows.

THE CABBAGE. As far as the cultivation of the cabbage is concerned, as pertaining to the kitchen garden, it is about as well to buy a few plants and set them out when the suitable time comes, as it is to try to raise them, unless one has some hot-beds or desires to raise the plants for the pleasure of so doing. For early use the seed should be sown in the hot-bed or a box in a sunny window about February 15th, covering the seed about half an inch deep. The plants will be ready to set in the garden about the 20th of April, before which time they should be transplanted at least twice to make good stocky plants of them. Set the plants from two to three feet apart each way, according to the variety, and cultivate often. A good crop of winter cabbages can be raised by sowing the seed in the open ground from the 10th to the 20th of June; drop a few seeds in each hill, and when the plants are well up thin them out, leaving them about three feet apart.

The Early Jersey Wakefield, and Henderson's Early Summer are good for early use, while Fottler's Brunswick and Stone Mason Drumhead are standards for fall and winter. Half a row of the early varieties will be found sufficient, and as to the late sorts, I usually plant quite a quantity, as there will be plenty of room for them after the pea crop has been gathered and cleared away.

THE CAULIFLOWER. Although the cauliflower is more adapted for growth by the experienced market gardener than it is by the amateur, yet there is no reason why a corner of our garden cannot be devoted to this most excellent vegetable, and good cauliflowers grown. The plants are set out and cultivated the same as cabbages, and should be transplanted at least twice before they are set where they are to remain, so that they may become good and stocky, thereby having sufficient vitality to commence at once a good growth. You can raise your own plants by sowing some seed in a box in a window or in the hot-bed, or, at the proper season, plants can be purchased and set out. The Early Snowball and Dwarf Erfurt are both desirable sorts. Let us set at least a row, which will take say seventy-five plants.

CELERY. Celery is also a market gardener's crop, but is easily

grown in the garden. The plants should be raised the same as cabbage or cauliflower plants, and set out in rows in the open ground from the 15th of June to the first of July. As the roots grow the earth is drawn up against the plants to bleach them, and this is continued at intervals until the crop is ready to gather. The Boston Market has been the popular variety for a great many years, and is so still; the Early Arlington is a good variety, and grows somewhat larger, but I would like to call your attention particularly to some of the crimson celeries, which have this advantage: that in the spring, when the Boston Market celery, and, for that matter, all white celeries, have become soft and lost their aroma, the pink celeries are just as good as when gathered in the fall. The new Dwarf Rose is a very desirable variety. Grow some pink celery next season, and I know it will please you.

One hundred plants will set one of our rows, as the plants should be about twelve inches apart. As celery usually follows some early crop, suppose we set two rows, as there will be plenty of room when it is time to plant this crop.

LETTUCE. Lettuce is a favorite with us all, and in its different varieties furnishes the best vegetable of the salad kind grown in the open garden. It requires to be cultivated in a moist soil to be crisp and tender, and needs to be grown in cool weather; and it is for this reason that the best lettuce is raised early in the spring or summer, before the ground becomes dry and hot. The seeds should be planted in rows, and covered a quarter of an inch deep. When the plants are well up, they should be thinned to twelve inches apart; if plants are used, set them the same distance apart. For New England, the Black Seeded Tennisball, for solid heads, and the Boston Fine Curled, for a curled lettuce, are both desirable varieties. There are innumerable other varieties of lettuce, but the two mentioned are good sorts. Half a row of lettuce will be found sufficient for our needs.

POLE, OR RUNNING BEANS. Pole beans, as a class, are not very hardy, and cannot be planted until settled mild weather. From May 20 until June 1—perhaps a little earlier in some sections—is about the right time. Pole beans are planted in hills, which should be at least four feet apart each way, and the plants in each hill should not be more than five, as it is necessary that these beans should have plenty of air and light to do their best.

The poles must be firmly set in the ground before the beans are planted, and the earth slightly raised about them ; the seed should be covered two inches deep.

If the ends of the runners of some of the later sorts are pinched off when they have reached four or five feet in height, it will hasten their ripening. Limas and Sievas, being very tender, should not be planted before the ground is very warm and mellow — say about June 1. One quart of pole beans will plant about 150 hills. The Large White Lima, Sieva or Small Lima, and Pole Horticultural, are the best shell beans, while the Black Wax Pole or Indian Chief is an excellent snap or string bean. It has been my custom to grow the pole varieties for shell beans, and to depend upon the bush sorts for snap beans, as the dwarf kinds are far superior to the pole varieties as far as string beans are concerned. One row of pole beans will be found sufficient for our wants, and suppose we divide this row between the Limas and Pole Horticultural.

BUSH, OR DWARF BEANS. Bush beans are somewhat hardier than pole beans, but they should not be planted until the weather becomes settled. All beans do best in warm, light soil, but will flourish in almost any soil or situation unless it be shaded or very wet. Plant in drills, from three to three and a half feet apart, and cover the same depth as for pole beans ; one quart of seed will plant about one hundred and twenty-five feet of row.

The Early Yellow Six Weeks and Dwarf Horticultural are the best green-podded string or snap kinds ; and for yellow varieties the Golden, White, and Black Wax take the lead. We must arrange for a bountiful supply of string beans for our table, so let us plant two rows and divide them in some such way as this : Half a row of Early Yellow Six Weeks and half a row of Golden Wax, planted say May 20 ; then wait until June 10 and plant another half-row of Golden Wax and half a row of Dwarf Horticultural, which last named variety, if not needed as a snap bean, can be allowed to ripen and become a most excellent shell bean ; in fact, one of the best.

PEAS. Peas are eaten by every one, and are so much liked that they are almost always placed first upon the list of vegetables to be planted in the family garden, and it is almost impossible to grow too many of them. To have a good succession of peas for the table from the 17th of June until the middle of July or the

first of August, or perhaps even later than this, it is necessary to make several plantings and to use quite a number of varieties,—early, medium, and late. If the peas planted grow over two feet in height they must be bushed; as, if they are not, they will fall over on one side or the other, and not only will the peas on the under side of the vines be apt to mildew, but the yield will not be so great as if they are properly staked up and the air and sunlight can have free access to them; and the garden will not look neat and tidy if pea vines are indiscriminately left to drop into the spaces between the rows.

For first early, the Dan O'Rourke and First and Best are as good as any. For second early, American Wonder, McLean's Advancer and Yorkshire Hero will be found excellent. For the general crop, the Champion of England, Carter's Stratagem, and Bliss's Ever-Bearing seem to take the lead. The Dan O'Rourke and First and Best are hard, smooth, white peas, and can be planted just as early in the spring as the ground can be made ready; but with the green, wrinkled varieties, such as American Wonder, McLean's Advancer, Champion of England, etc., it is different, as these green, wrinkled kinds are more tender and must not be planted until the ground is warm and mellow. For this reason hard, smooth peas, so-called, can be obtained fit for the table somewhat earlier than the green, wrinkled varieties, because they can be planted earlier. It is better to plant more peas than one needs than it is to run short of this most excellent vegetable when the season is only partly gone. I have mentioned only a few varieties but they are all good ones, and will be sure to give the most perfect satisfaction.

Suppose we plant in our garden six rows of peas, and do it in the following manner: As soon as the ground can be worked, say from April 8 to 12, sow a row of Dan O'Rourke. These peas will be ready for the table June 17, and will last in a green condition until June 25 or 26. A little later than the above were planted, say April 20, plant a row of First and Best, which can be picked from June 25 until July 1 or 2. American Wonder will then be ready, if planted about April 24 or 25, and so in order will come McLean's Advancer, Yorkshire Hero, and Champion of England. A point comes to my mind here, which one is not apt to think of in arranging the dates for planting vegetables for succession, and that is that as the season advances and

becomes warmer, peas, and in fact all kinds of vegetables, grow faster and overtake one another, so to speak, and the dates of planting the different sorts become lost, and all the varieties seem to ripen together. For example, five days in the date of planting peas in April will make about five days difference in harvesting in June. But five days in the date of planting peas in May, will not apparently make any difference in their ripening in July. Of course I refer to the same variety each time.

SWEET CORN. If there is one vegetable that everybody grows, I think it is sweet corn. It is ready for the table at a time when the early summer vegetables are nearly gone, and those of autumn are not quite ready. This is especially so with reference to sweet corn grown in the average kitchen garden, as corn grown in this manner is from two weeks to a month later than corn grown by a market gardener. If this crop is planted in hills, they should be made three feet apart; but I prefer to plant in rows without making any hills, simply thinning the plants to about eight inches apart, thereby getting a larger yield than if planted in hills.

The Early Corey and Early Crosby are two good early varieties. Then come Potter's Excelsior, Moore's Early Concord, and Stowell's Evergreen. There are varieties later than Stowell's Evergreen, but it is not always possible to ripen them in this section. A good way to obtain a continuous supply of this vegetable is to select some good variety and make plantings every two weeks, from the 20th of May until the 1st of July, and by so doing a supply can be obtained covering a longer period than if several different varieties are planted at the same time; for, as the season becomes advanced, it seems as if all the varieties became fit to use together. Be sure and plant enough to have a bountiful supply throughout the season. At least eight rows should be devoted to sweet corn.

THE TOMATO. Tomato plants should be set out in rows about June 1. Their cultivation is very simple. Set them six to eight feet apart, make the ground very rich, and keep them free from weeds; this seems to be about all that is required. Just before frost take up the vines with all the earth that can be made to adhere to the roots, and place them in the cellar, and what tomatoes have not been picked (that are fully grown) will ripen. I have seen perfect ripe tomatoes, of most excellent quality, on the

table at Thanksgiving, which were ripened in this way. The favorite varieties are the Aeme, Livingston's Perfection, Cardinal, Essex Hybrid, and Emery. There are so many good tomatoes that it is hard to make a selection; but any one who plants any of the above kinds will be perfectly satisfied. We shall need to set out three or four dozen plants in order to have a good supply all summer; and if these plants are set eight feet apart in the rows our tomatoes will take about two rows of our garden space.

OTHER VEGETABLES. The above list includes most varieties usually cultivated in the kitchen garden, but there are several others which are equally good; yet I will not speak of them at any great length, as I have already referred to the cultivation of several vegetables which are cultivated in the same manner as the following: Curled Cress or Peppergrass, Dandelion, Parsley, Spinach, Egg-plant, and Pumpkin: the first four sorts are planted in rows, and, having been thinned out to the proper distances, are most easily grown, and a great addition to any garden. It is, perhaps, the best plan to purchase your pepper plants, as a dozen is about all that is needed. I think the squash pepper is the best variety to grow. A few hills of the small sugar pumpkin will give a good supply for the pumpkin pies.

I have not forgotten the odd things, so to speak, such as Artichokes, Chervil, Endive, Leek, Brussels Sprouts, etc.; but any one wishing to grow them will find plenty of publications describing their culture.

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