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Kansas State Horticultural Society.

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SOME FACTS ABOUT GARDENS.

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SOME FACTS ABOUT GARDENS.

INTRODUCTION.

The contents of this little book have been collected and arranged for the benefit of the beginner, and to remind others of the possibilities of a "little garden well tilled."

The home garden is a prominent factor in the problem of how to reduce the high cost of living.

For capital invested and the labor employed, a garden will give better returns than any other enterprise that is open to all the people. The food furnished is wholesome, timely, and is produced at a minimum cost.

A home garden utilizes labor that otherwise would be lost.

It brings our young people into direct contact with nature.

It teaches our boys and girls that a task completed is a victory gained.

The produce of the garden is exempt from transportation tax.

This is an industry where the producer is also the consumer. Gardening develops the initiative and cultivates the habit of doing the right thing at the right time and in the proper way.

There are some real things that you must have for successful gardening:

First. Fertile soil.

Second. Sufficient water.

Third. Good seed.

Fourth. Proper cultivation.

The garden ground should be plowed or forked during the fall, so that it may get the benefit of freezing, thawing, wetting and drying during the dormant season. This puts the soil in splendid condition for early working in the spring, with mellow, mealy and well-loosened ground.

Implements for the garden are an important factor, and the best are none too good. The garden seed drill separate from the cultivator is a great convenience and almost a necessity. It enables one to plant the seed evenly, saving seed, saving labor in thinning, and planting at a regular depth.

The equipment of a garden is not complete without a wheel hoe. The simple, inexpensive ones on the market make it possible for every garden to have one. The old-fashioned hoe has its place and must be used. For transplanting use a steel dibble.

Minor details of the garden have been omitted, as such information is easily obtained from seed catalogues.

Only a few varieties are named, as locality and personal preference have much to do in selection.

Careful selection must be practiced in buying seeds. The best seed that we buy is none too good, and no one is wealthy enough to knowingly buy poor seed. The best seed is always the cheapest.

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New varieties or novelties should always have some attention and be experimented with by those who are progressive and looking for some improvement along these lines. The standards for to-day at one time were experiments that proved successful.

Some kinds of vegetables require cool weather in which to grow and produce the best results. Among these are: Spinach, lettuce, onions, carrots, peas, parsnips, beets, radishes, etc. Some others must have warm, and quite warm, weather for best results; these are tomato, sweet potato, egg plant and beans.

VEGETABLES.

In the garden we have plants that live from year to year. Some of these should be in every garden, but here we will speak of only two. The first in rank, we will say, is rhubarb, which is always welcome as one of the first "fruits" of spring. A dozen "eyes," set thirty inches apart in the row, will furnish an ordinary family, and the one next door, too, with plenty of the most wholesome of our early spring vegetables. Do not gather any of the stalks the first year. This plant is a great feeder and must have plenty of fertility. Mulch in the fall with barnyard manure. Linnaeus is a good standard variety, and if the stalks are pulled with care, so as not to destroy the crown, the roots will last five or six years, and then may be renewed by splitting the hill and leaving one-half in the ground and removing the other half, which may be separated into eyes and used for more planting.

The second one is asparagus, which should have a place in all practical gardens. A purple variety is the one most used in this locality. Roots one year old are the best to plant. You buy these at a seed store or nursery. Plant in a trench six or eight inches deep, cover lightly, and as the shoots grow bring a little more soil around the stalk, and by fall the ground should be level. Do not cut any of the new shoots the first two years. The third year cut for a short time, fourteen to twenty days. This plant furnishes a large yield of succulent food and must be well cared for. Give good cultivation and plenty of fertilizers. Use barnyard fertilizers. The seedsmen can supply a balanced commercial fertilizer which is very convenient, and perhaps equally good, but, whichever is used, be liberal in the application. Forty or fifty plants, set thirty inches apart in the row, will furnish a family with an abundance of this very excellent vegetable.

The onion is one of the standard vegetables for the garden. We will speak of only two ways to produce this much-abused and also much-praised vegetable. Plant seed early in the spring, as soon as the ground will permit, white, red or yellow, as you prefer. Globe shape is preferable. This will give onions which may be used for green ones in June and dry ones for the middle of July, or during the balance of the year if properly stored. If planted early in a hotbed and transplanted to the open they will produce earlier and larger onions than when planted in the regular way. Try a few of the Giant Gibraltar. The other method

is to plant bottom sets. These will produce green onions in May, and soon after that time they will furnish dry onions, very similar to seed onions, only earlier.

Peas are relished by all, and there are varieties to suit the tastes of all. The dwarf or half dwarf are the ones mostly used. The smooth pea is planted earlier than the wrinkled sort, as it grows better in cold, wet ground than the other one. The wrinkled variety is the better one, and is the main variety for a family garden. The pea is one of the very best of our vegetables, and is healthful, palatable and nutritious. Plant peas.

For those who like "greens," spinach is as useful as any. Plant early in drills some long-standing variety. It is very apt to go to seed in warm weather. Plant in the fall the round-leaved variety, and if not all used, with a light mulch it will be fairly good and very early in the spring. This crop is a very convenient one planted early, needs no weeding, and is out of the way for summer crops. Planted in the fall, when but few other plants will grow, it makes a very accommodating vegetable for the garden.

Mustard is another one of the greens, and is well worth planting for those who like it.

The beet is one of the most common vegetables and is grown in nearly every garden. The turnip-rooted ones are the kinds mostly planted for table use, although some of the long-rooted varieties are of fine texture and well worth planting. Plant early, with plenty of seed in the drill, and then thin and use surplus for beet "greens." This is a grand early vegetable, and may also be gathered and stored for winter use. It breaks the monotony of potatoes three times a day.

The carrot is a vegetable that deserves more recognition than the American people give it, and is another vegetable that should be used to relieve the most overworked vegetable in the United States—the Irish potato. For table use the half-long is the kind to plant. The carrot is mostly used in soups, but is worthy of a place on the table as a nutritious, healthful vegetable. Try some.

The cabbage is another universal vegetable and is used as an article of food in various ways. The cabbage has been long in use and dates back to a very early time, and is used by all people that we have any record of. This is an all-season vegetable and can be ready for use by June, and frost often prevents some of the late varieties from heading. For early use, plant seeds in boxes in February and transplant into the field from the 1st to the 15th of April. Later varieties may be transplanted as late as the first of August. This is a very popular vegetable, but not very nutritious. Its universal use is its greatest recommendation.

One of our very good vegetables is the parsnip. Plant very early, thin to three or four inches, in rows eighteen to twenty-four inches apart. The parsnip is best for use after being frosted in the ground. When dug and properly stored it makes a very good vegetable for a change from the potato. For compact size get the short variety.

Beans as an article of food have an important place in the markets of the world. This is one of the vegetables of which the pod as well as the green and dry bean is used as a food. There are many kinds and shapes

—long beans, nearly round beans, and some that are decidedly flat in shape. Some are quite small and some grow to a size that one individual bean will make a small mouthful. There are bush and pole varieties. Green-pod, yellow-pod and Lima beans are all that we need to consider at this time. There is no very marked difference in the yellow and green pods.

The Lima is the bean of excellence. There is a bush and a pole Lima. For a home garden the bush Lima is preferred; this gives the green-shelled Limas of which our market has never been supplied. Some trouble to pick, rather tedious to shell, but it will pay to plant plenty of them, for a freshly shelled mess of Limas is fit for any table, and with a little effort any one may produce them. Pole Lima beans are also very good and will produce more fruit to the amount of ground, but it is more difficult to handle.

Turnips form a nice change in the vegetable foods, although not considered to have much nutrition. They are used in soups extensively, also as a boiled vegetable, and sometimes kraut is made from those grown in the fall. Sown extra early, the flat varieties will make a bunching turnip quicker than the globe. For all other purposes, whether of spring or fall planting, the globe variety is preferable. The turnip has more food value than it is generally given credit for. About eight weeks after sowing they are large enough for table use. Plant some.

Tomato is the real fruit of the garden. No other crop that we raise has such a range of prices, as well as territory, as the tomato. In early spring the shipped-in tomato sells as high as 15 cents per pound; later in the season they retail as low as 25 cents per half-bushel basket, and sometimes lower. This is the fruit for everybody. "Wholesome" is applied to this fruit without any limit. The dwarf, or early variety, is mostly used for early use. To-day the Earliana, which is a large variety, is the earliest and most prolific, but it is not a favorite with the trade. Dwarf, Champion, Kansas Standard, Dwarf Stone, Bonny Best and Chalk's Early Jewel are all good early varieties. The stone is a good late one. Seed is usually planted in the hotbed in early March, transplanted into cold frames, with or without paper wrapping for the roots, and planted into the field safely about the first week in May. The tomato requires a fertile soil, good cultivation and drainage. Arrange to have plenty of this crop for immediate use and sufficient for canning.

Eggplant is not grown generally, but is well worthy of a place in any garden. It is a very interesting plant to observe while producing its fruit. There are three varieties—black, purple and white. Either of the dark ones may be planted in this locality. One very nice feature of this vegetable is that it comes into fruiting at a time when we are looking for a change of diet. This is cooked by frying, and is desirable as a substitute for the meats.

Lettuce is another universal product of the garden. It has been used as an article of food since a very early date. There are several varieties; we need to mention only two. Leaf lettuce will grow nearly anywhere, but appreciates good soil as well as any other plant. It should be sown early, in drills, but may be sown broadcast. Head lettuce should be

planted under cover and then transplanted to the open field. Neither of these will succeed in hot weather, so must be treated as an extra early or a late crop.

The Irish potato is the vegetable of the world. It is planted in the smallest of home gardens as well as in commercial fields having hundreds of acres devoted to the production of this the most important of all vegetables, and is produced by all the civilized people of the world. There are records of 1000 bushels having been raised on an acre. Sometimes the yield is as low as ten bushels per acre. The average for Kansas for the last six years is fifty-eight bushels per acre.

New varieties are constantly being introduced, and that which is the leading variety to-day may be replaced by a better one to-morrow. Early Ohio is the leader in this vicinity at the present time, with the Cobbler contending for a place in the first rank.

The sweet potato is used extensively as an article of food, and ranks with the Irish potato and the bean. Its range of practical growth is restricted on account of the fact that it needs a light soil and hot weather for the best results. Wherever it can be grown, it makes good returns for the labor bestowed. In this locality the Yellow Jersey is the main crop for table as well as for commercial purposes. Red Jersey is about the same, both for yield and quality. This is a good, wholesome, nutritious vegetable.

VINE CROPS. Under this head we have much that interests the human family—watermelon, muskmelon, squash, cucumber, pumpkins and gourds. There is in this section no other crop that seems to be subject to as many insect enemies as the cucumber, to which we look for some food, much pleasure, and, when we succeed, a great amount of satisfaction. We do not wish to discourage you before you get started; we only wish to impress on your mind that activity, and continued activity, is the price you will have to pay for the produce of the vines. In a small garden it is difficult to handle this crop when some of the vines grow to be twenty or thirty feet in length.

Plant a few hills of watermelons and train the vines to grow along the fence row or some other out-of-the-way place, and when the length exceeds the length of the garden trim it to fit its confines. Muskmelons are a delicious and very popular vegetable and are a rival of the peach as a table dessert. There are so many varieties that one can hardly afford to recommend any special one. Select some of the netted Gem types and you will not miss it very far.

Plant some type of the White Spine cucumber. There are many varieties, but advocates for each. This variety is used more than any other.

The early summer squash will produce fruit easier than any of the other squashes, and is also the least valuable of any. Crookneck or scallop, yellow or white, there is but little difference. The large yellow crookneck is in good demand. Green-warted Hubbard is perhaps the best squash that grows. It is good in the fall, and when properly handled will keep for winter use. This squash is excellent for "pumpkin pie."

The pumpkin is such a rank grower that it does not fit into the garden. It is an important field crop in some localities.

Those who have planted the seeds for a vine crop must be prepared to protect the plants as soon as the first two leaves show above the ground. The first insect to appear, and the most persistent, is the cucumber beetle—that little striped fellow. You should “bug” each hill twice daily. Destroy all the bugs you can and scatter air-slacked or hydrated lime or tobacco dust about the hill, and perhaps this will scare the beetles so that some of them will not bother that hill any more. This plan must be followed until the plant has a strong vine. The plant louse, or aphid, is another pest which must be controlled by a spray that will get to the underside of the leaf. The spray may be a coal-oil emulsion, or the Black Leaf Forty.

Later will come a large squash bug. Fine ashes or air-slacked lime sprinkled on this pest will drive it away. The remedies are simple and easily applied. The pests are quickly recognized. You must act promptly and persistently; then you may reasonably expect to have your efforts rewarded with some fruit. The above remedies apply to all vines of which we have spoken.

Corn is another field crop that has a place in the home garden. All of the corn that is produced is good, and some of it is better. Extra Early Adam and Early Adam are the first to plant. These are not sweet. The main thing is earliness. Select a succession of the sweet corns. The last planting may be Early Adam. With the proper selection of your succession of varieties, the table should be supplied with this table variety of corn from the latter part of June to the time when frost comes, covering a period of about one hundred days.

The radish is one of the fixtures of all gardens. There is the long, the short, and the winter radish. The turnip-rooted type is the one generally used in the home garden. The long ones are good and much preferred by many. Plant early, a few feet of a row at a time, for soon they get pithy, and a radish that is not crisp is of little value. The radish grows best in cool weather. The winter radish has never met with popular favor in this locality, but is considered good by some who have tried it.

FRUIT.

Fruit is as necessary to the human family as is the vegetable. The apple is king of fruits, but it is not always adapted to the confines of a home garden, and requires from eight to twelve years to produce fruit.

Nature has provided us with vine and bush fruits that may bear one year from transplanting. There is one fruit that is more universal than any other; that is the strawberry. First to plant. One of our eminent men said: “The Lord could make a better fruit than the strawberry, but he never did.”

It will grow nearly everywhere, under all conditions. The strawberry must have a place in every garden if the owner is just to himself. A square yard will produce some fruit, more square yards will produce more

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fruit. Even though you can give only a small space to fruit, give it to the strawberry.

The varieties are more numerous than those of any other fruit. They are divided into the early-, medium-, late- and autumn-bearing varieties. The varieties are constantly being improved, and the one which is considered the best to-day may only be a memory in a short time. Ask your local nurseryman for the variety that does best in your locality.

Do not allow too many plants to form in the strawberry bed. A plant should have a three-inch space, and four inches will be better.

A raspberry is also a proper fruit for the garden. The Cumberland is a good one among the blacks. Nearly any one of the reds will do to try. They require more care and give best results where winter protection is given. The St. Regis, an ever-bearing, is a red variety that has numerous friends. The purple ones, in the right place and with proper handling, give a fruit that is excellent for family use. The quality is fine, but it is not as regular in producing fruit in this locality as it should be.

The blackberry is a profitable fruit, a wholesome fruit, and if there is room in the garden, plant them. It is quite a sure bearer. Kenoyer and Early Harvest are good for early and Mersereau for late. Avoid too many fruit stalks among all berry plants.

The grape is a good fruit, easily grown, and proves its worth every year by an increased acreage. One- or two-year-old vines to set out will give good satisfaction. The Concord is a very hardy variety and a standard for home or commercial vineyard. Moore's Early is the best early variety for this locality. Either one of these varieties will do well for an arbor, which for a small area is a good way to use the space. Where no other space can be used, train the vines to grow on the fence. Do not allow too much vine, or the grapes will be small. Prune while the vines are dormant, from November to March. You will not regret having planted some grapevines.

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