

entirely for the leaves, which are boiled as spinach, and for the leafstalk, which, when separated from the lamina of the leaf, is cooked and eaten as asparagus under the name of "chard."

It is not every one who cares for this vegetable, but some prefer it to cabbage; being more easily cultivated, it affords a winter supply of an excellent substitute for that vegetable. A sowing should be made annually, for, although the plant is biennial, it runs to seed during the second year, and leaves gathered from the shots or shoots are of poorer quality than the first radical leaves.

Experiments are at present being carried out at Ruakura to test its value as a stock-food, which, if successful, will bring it into general use on all sheep-stations on account of its being so easily grown.

It will adapt itself to various soils and climates, and will stand feeding off several times in a season.

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## POTATOES AT RUAKURA.

A. W. GREEN.

THIS season's potato crop at Ruakura Farm of Instruction is the most even and the healthiest crop yet grown. This success, I believe, is mainly due to selection of seed, while the better-constructed potato-shed, for storing tubers during winter, has no doubt assisted in improving the crop. With the object of securing the best seed for planting, the following methods were adopted for storing, sprouting, and selecting the tubers. The tubers were placed in shallow boxes, so that a current of air could pass between them, and all be exposed to light. The light had the effect of turning the tubers green, thereby keeping them firm, and preventing untimely sprouting. Finally, with good seed, it produced strong, sturdy sprouts. A good opportunity for selection was afforded when these sprouts were developing, for at this period weak sets can be detected by their weak eyes; and weak-eyed sets should never reach the potato-field. It is often due to these that a light crop is obtained, and the seed sample for next year is thereby ruined. A few of the varieties which are showing up above the average at Ruakura are Gamekeeper, Irish Queen, Commercial, Up-to-Date, Northern Star, Sutton's Bountiful, Conquest, Daniel's Sensation, and Gold Coin. The last-named variety was the first to come into flower, and, although it cannot be called a first early, it has the advantage of quickly maturing its crop. One spraying has been applied, and the crop is free from blight.