

Harvesting is carried out just after blooming, and it should be remembered that the leaves (not the stem) contain most of the essential oil. It is cut by hand, a knife similar to that used by cooks being employed. When cut it is laid on the ground to dry. After drying it is put into coconut-fibre mats, and at this stage one is practically independent of weather-damage, but on no account must the herb be matted when damp. The patent still to extract the oil is the last stage.

The one planting lasts from six to seven years in England. After harvest the plants are ploughed in 4 in. to 5 in. deep. In the spring the mint reappears, and light harrows are then run over it two or three times. Harrowing must be discontinued after the mint is 2 in. to 3 in. high, and the hoe again requisitioned for cleansing purposes. On no account must the soil be worked when it is damp.

To give an idea of the financial result the returns from my last crop were as follow :—

20 acres area yielded 422 lb. of essential oil, at £1 7s. per pound	£	s.	d.
.. .. .	569	14	0
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Plants cost £9, planting £30; spread over six years, say	..	..	..
Hoeing .. .. .	..	..	..
Ten loads farmyard manure	..	..	..
1 ton shoddy	..	..	..
Soot (for ammonia), 40 bushels per acre, at 5d.	..	..	..
Harvesting	..	..	..
Distilling	..	..	..
	£178	18	4

It is doubtful whether plants would require anything more than a top-dressing of soot or some form of ammonia in New Zealand, or whether the plants would require renewal for the first fifteen years.

[If the cultivation of peppermint were taken up in New Zealand on a commercial scale, it would be necessary at first to strip the dried leaves and bale these, or bale the plants entire, and export to British distilleries. Should any considerable quantity be grown no doubt a Home firm would establish a distillery in the Dominion. In the event of the latter development the distillation of lavender, rosemary, and other aromatic herbs would follow as a matter of course. Many parts of New Zealand provide an admirable environment for the production of herbs of the description desired. Such an industry should appeal to women who favour a country life.—ED.]