

WASTE-PLACE PLANTING AND WEEDS.

In considering the feasibility of profitably growing any special crops for honey-production alone one is forced to admit that the only case in which this is at all practicable is with regard to waste land, especially waste sandy land near the sea. If it is possible merely by surface-sowing a few pounds of cheap seed to produce a permanent crop rich in nectar, then possibly such an operation is justified. Melilot clover is especially suggestive in this connection, and certain of the brooms also might prove valuable. With regard to the latter, ordinary broom is a noxious weed in many districts, and this brings me to the point of the really great part that weeds, or at least plants not intentionally cultivated, play in our present honey-production. Looking up the Noxious Weeds Act, I noticed that out of thirty gazetted noxious weeds no less than twenty are good honey-plants. One has only got to think of the value of the following plants in order to appreciate the part played by weeds: Catsear (probably as important as white clover), capeweed, dandelion, hawkbit, ragwort, smartweed, yarr, blackberry, Californian thistle and other members of the thistle family, wild turnip, shepherd's purse, viper's bugloss, burr clovers, melilot, ox-eye daisy, pennyroyal, and a host of others.

It is clear that the modern trend of agriculture will be in the direction of very greatly reducing the amount of our weed flora at present available as bee-forage. Extraordinary as it appears, the systematic control of weeds, important as that work is to the country as a whole, would, unless their place be taken by equally valuable honey-plants, prove quite harmful to the bee industry. However, certain weeds such as catsear, which forms an integral part of all pastures on certain types of land, will always be with us.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I would again urge on all beekeepers the importance of keeping an eye on the general trend of agricultural development. It may be shown to be quite feasible to modify certain agricultural operations with good results from the apiarist's point of view, and it is one of the duties of the beekeeper to prove that such modifications are payable propositions from the farmer's standpoint, apart from being of value to the honey industry. If this is done systematically and thoroughly there seems little reason why the sources of honey-supply should not be very appreciably increased.