

## SEASONAL NOTES.

### THE FARM.

#### ROOT CROPS.

*Mangolds and carrots* will be making good growth in December, and every endeavour should be made to get them thinned as early as possible, so as to check weeds and let the young plants become well established before the hot weather sets in. Carrots should be thinned out to about 6 in. apart, and mangolds to 1 ft. Wider thinning is frequently recommended, but many results go to show that the spacings mentioned give the heaviest crops and the best-quality roots.

The land between the drills should have frequent cultivation, so as to encourage root-development and control weeds. For the horse-hoe the L-shaped tines with flat blades are best while the plants are young. In cultivating mangolds care should be taken not to bank the soil around the plants; on the contrary, it should be pulled away from them. If the plants are pale and showing poor leaf-growth a top-dressing with 1 cwt. of nitrate of soda after thinning will help to push them along, but if doing well they are better without the nitrate.

*Further sowings of soft turnips* for cow-feeding and lamb-fattening may be made early in December, and when grown for late autumn and winter feeding they should be put in towards the end of the month. Good varieties for this purpose are Green Globe and Green-top Aberdeen, or "Green-top Scotch" as they are frequently called. Green-top varieties are hardier and better keepers than purple-tops, but mature more slowly. All the Aberdeens are apt to bury themselves, and are more suitable for ridging than for sowing on the flat.

*Swedes.*—In districts where swedes are still a staple crop the later part of December is the best time to sow, unless early sowings have been proved by experience to be satisfactory. For example, near the coast in north-west Wellington and Taranaki it is necessary to get them in during the first half of the month, but in higher situations any time between, say, the 20th and the end of the month will be found to be suitable. The later the crop is sown, the less likely it is to be destroyed by dry-rot; on the other hand, if left too late there is the danger of dry weather and a poor strike. Superlative, Masterpiece, Magnum Bonum, Grandmaster, and Up-to-date are among the best varieties. They are all liable to attacks of dry-rot, particularly the first mentioned, Grandmaster and Up-to-date being the most resistant.

A fine, firm, moist seed-bed is essential, in order that the crop may make a good start and so stand a good chance against the "fly." From 10 oz. to 14 oz. of seed should be sown through every second coulter of the drill; the better the land and the seed-bed, the less seed required. New seed of reliable origin should always be used; old seed is very apt to be disappointing. Fertilizers should be used with the seed at the rate of 2 cwt. to 3 cwt. per acre. Most of the proprietary manures give good results, but where the farmer wishes to mix his own the following will be found very suitable generally: Half superphosphate and half either Ephos phosphate, basic slag, bone-meal, or Nauru phosphate; on old land  $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. sulphate of potash per acre added to the above will in some cases be advantageous.

Care must be taken that a run-off of rough grazing will be available adjacent to the swede-paddock when the latter is fed off. Failing this, a supply of hay will be a great asset.

#### HAY AND ENSILAGE.

In the earlier districts crops for both hay and ensilage will be ready for cutting from the beginning of December onwards. To get the best of grass for either purpose it should be cut when the majority of plants are in bloom; if allowed to stand until the seed is ripening, the quality of both hay and ensilage will be inferior. Further, if the crop is removed at the proper time the clover