

of the leaf and a mottling of yellow spots, commencing on the lower leaves first. When this condition develops on the middle leaves the plant should be harvested at the first opportunity. Avoid doing this shortly after a considerable fall of rain, as the leaf for a while will be thin and in poor condition. The best conditions are after and during bright sunny weather, when the leaf will be found to contain those aromatic qualities that increase its value. The method is to split the stalk to within 6 in. of the ground, and then cut it off at ground-level, leaving the plants on the ground for a while—an hour or so—till wilted. They are then threaded on the curing-sticks, spacing them about 4 in. apart, and carted to the curing-shed.

If the plants are wilted too long in a hot sun or dried quickly in the curing-shed the plant-cells are killed and the leaf loses its texture. Such tobacco when used carbonizes badly—a very common fault. The arrangement of ventilators is made with a view to controlling this development, retarding the drying-process somewhat at first until the leaf has mellowed and most of the green colour has gone out. The process is then quickened, and an endeavour made to secure an even and satisfactory colour. What happens is the development of an oxidizing agent throughout the leaf, which is responsible for the chemical changes in its constituents—changes that are completed in the further operation of fermentation. If this development is retarded too long, as it might be in cold wet weather, there is danger of fungus and bacterial troubles arising, hence the need of endeavouring to mature the plants at a period when bright warm weather may be expected.

—W. C. Hyde, *Horticulturist*.

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*Inspection of Imported Fruit, Plants, &c.*—The Horticulture Division reports that the bulk of the consignments in 1923–24 arrived in good order and condition. The fruit inspected was practically clear of fruit-fly infection, only a small quantity being condemned on account of this pest. Fumigation was necessary, however, in connection with a number of lines found on examination to be affected with live scale and mealy bug. Several consignments of almonds badly attacked by the Indian meal-moth (*Plodia interpunctella*) had either to be reshipped or destroyed, and similar action was necessary in regard to a quantity of imported bulbs infected with bulb-mite.

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*Work at Wallaceville Veterinary Laboratory.*—The annual report of the Live-stock Division states that during the year 1923–24, 1,522 specimens were received at the Laboratory for examination, comprising 794 milk-specimens for contagious mammitis, 155 for the biological test for tubercle bacilli, 241 blood-specimens for contagious abortion, and 119 specimens from Stock Inspectors, the remainder being of a miscellaneous pathological nature. There were also received a number of specimens connected with dairy bacteriology, concerning which work has been undertaken in conjunction with the Dairy Division. An investigation as to the cause underlying the complaint of sterility in dairy cows, now troublesome among cows in dairying districts, is in progress. Field officers' observations had narrowed the work to granular vaginitis and contagious abortion, but the *Bacillus abortus* has now been eliminated as a factor in sterility as the result of the examination of a number of blood-specimens from herds where vaginitis was prevalent. The form of sterility present therefore appears to be the result of granular vaginitis. Various methods of treatment of affected animals have been tried, but nothing better than simple astringents used in the acute stage has so far been ascertained. During the year, 71,250 doses of black-leg vaccine prepared at the Laboratory were sent out for use by officers.