

The temperatures during February and March still are favourable for the spread and development of verrucosis, provided other conditions are suitable. Where there is a further blossoming and setting of young fruit, an application of Bordeaux 3-4-50 should be made.

*Budding* may be carried out now, if desired, provided there is sufficient sap flowing to cause the bark to lift easily. If conditions are suitable, the buds take readily, but growth is not made until the spring. Autumn buds develop ahead of those worked in the following spring.

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## POULTRY-KEEPING.

### Systematic Culling.

As to cull means to separate anything from the rest because of inferiority the importance of the work or art of culling to the poultry-keeper cannot be overestimated. The process may be said to be a continuous one with the successful man. It commences when eggs are being set, and is continued with his birds throughout the year. To start with, only eggs of a good size, shape, colour, and texture of shell should be set. In this connection it may be mentioned that three times each year a certain number of the eggs laid by each bird competing at our local laying competitions are judged by officers of this Department for shape, colour, size, and texture of shell, and prizes are awarded accordingly. Though some owners take a keen interest in these judgments, results seem to indicate that many breeders fail to appreciate the importance of this matter.

If a comparison was made each year of the points awarded for size of eggs and texture of shells, it should serve as a very useful guide as to how the vitality and constitution of one's strain is being maintained. If smaller eggs are being produced and less points are gradually being awarded for texture of shell, it should be taken as a warning that the body is gradually getting worn out, and steps should be taken to correct matters. It must be remembered that the hen is not a machine, so when nature sends out these first distress signals every breeder would be wise if he took them as warnings that the exertion and drain of sustained and forced egg-production has been carried far enough, that greater care is needed in the selection of breeding-stock, and that some fresh blood is required.

A person desiring to purchase a bird or birds from a laying competition would be well advised to ascertain the number of points awarded to their eggs, especially for size and texture of shell.

When chickens are hatched, only those showing strength and vitality should be placed under the brooders, while it is better to destroy those showing any weakness.

As the young stock grow those showing want of constitution, poor development, or any deformity should be eliminated. Where such a systematic culling is practised it will be found, in some cases, that when it comes to the end of the first laying-season up to one-third or even more of the pullets hatched have been culled, but the poultry-keeper who adopts such a system gets the very best return from his plant, and maintains a good strong vigorous flock which is seldom attacked with any epidemic or outbreak of disease. There are, however, many poultry-keepers who fail to see the necessity for such hard culling, and some who from want of better knowledge or perhaps lack of interest in their poultry do not practice culling.

It is the desire of the Department to assist poultry-keepers in keeping up the quality of their birds, and if those requiring advice make application to the Department arrangements will be made, if possible, for an officer to visit their farms and give a demonstration. Undoubtedly the best way to keep a flock on a good paying basis is to adopt a regular system of culling throughout the twelve months, but, if this is not convenient, at