

Timely Cultivation

Is The Foundation Of The Crop

"Where grows? Where grows it not? If vain our toil We ought to blame the culture, not the soil."
—Pope.

WITH today's modern, high-speed methods, improved seed and scientific fertilisation, the objects of cultivation are being slowly but surely lost sight of, or are being pushed into the background; yet the successful crop still depends on thorough and timely cultivation, whether it be an annual one, such as wheat, or a permanent one of grass. High-powered tractors, multi-furrow ploughs, combination harrows, cultivators, rollers, seed and manure are all useless to secure economic returns if their use influences the departure from basic principles established centuries ago.

The early agriculturist had but one means of producing a crop—that of cultivation—and this he developed to a high degree. Even today, proper cultivation is still the well-built house in which the crop weathers the storm. Manures, improved seed and power are only additional modern improvements; yet these are the cause of the increasingly familiar sight in spring of the untouched stubble of last autumn's crop. The introduction of power to the farm has caused a slackening of the effort in crop production, undoubtedly due to the knowledge that the work can now be done so much more quickly. The result has been that the time factor, which is perhaps the most important aspect of cultivation, is not allowed to operate properly. If, however, modern methods are used in combination with this essential, the result will be an all-round increase in crop yield and fertility and a decrease in expenditure.

In working land of any description, the object is to provide a suitable place for the particular crop to thrive and grow to its best advantage. In this respect, the habits of the crop must be considered. For instance, what is suitable for wheat would be totally unsuitable for peas. It is not, however, the intention to give an account of the method of acquiring suitable conditions for any particular crop or crops or the cultivation necessary

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for different soil types. The endeavour is to show that unless the cultivation is carried out with thought to the objective and over a sufficient period, it is not possible to secure the best result.

Two Objects

Cultivation is carried out with two objects in view—firstly, the formation of a satisfactory seed bed, and secondly—and more important, as if this is carried out the former follows as a result—the working of the soil at such a time and in such a manner

that those factors which are essential for good germination, growth and productivity are brought about to the best advantage of the crop. It is because of the ease with which the first factor can now be brought about that the second function is being lost sight of. How often today is the cultivation for any particular crop disposed of by the phrase, "The land should be brought to a satisfactory seed bed"? With plenty of power available on the farm, a mechanically satisfactory seed bed can be produced too easily today. Yet such a result can be, and too often is, totally unsuited for crop growth.

It is in the second object that the secret of good cultivation lies. This is the factor which distinguishes the good crop from the poor one. The influence of cultivation on land lies in its ability to control soil structure, soil air, soil moisture, bacteria, and plant



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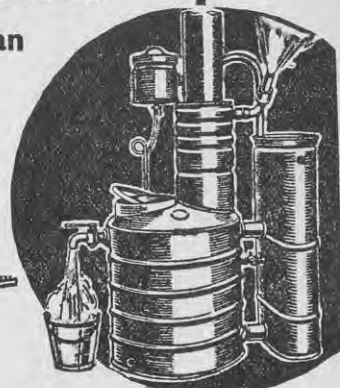


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