

# ON THE LAND

## SCIENCE OF THE AXE OR AXECRAFT AND BUSHCRAFT (Contributed.) PALINGS.

These are split up precisely in the same way as shingles. A heavier knife, a larger "dolly" and a second rest or fulcrum are, however, necessary, as palings are anything in length from 3½ft to 5ft. The second fulcrum is placed at a suitable height for working; downward leverage being exercised and the billets turned, when necessary, to facilitate true splitting.

### FIREWOOD.

The native hardwoods such as maire, rata, manuka, matipo, etc., make first-class firewood, while there are a great variety of other forest trees but slightly inferior for supplying this indispensable need. It is not here intended to indicate the manner of dealing with the native trees but to confine remarks to those commonly grown in plantations in the open country where forests never existed, or if they did, have entirely disappeared.

It is more fitting here to point out the manner of dealing with the latter class of timber because, generally speaking, axecraft cannot be expected to attain the same standard of proficiency in open plantation country that is the regular thing in the bush districts.

The willow, blue-gum, pinus insignis, macrocarpa, and, to a lesser extent, the poplar, are all turned to account for firewood where the native hardwoods are scarce or costly.

The willow, being easily cut up and split, is perhaps most extensively used. It will be found the more economical plan to cut up good supplies for future use while the wood is green. Green willow can be cut up about twice as quickly as dry. When dry it can be carried more cheaply, being lighter. Where destined to be used in about 2ft lengths it will be more profitable, if a deft axeman is engaged to do the work, to cut it up into suitable lengths at once in preference to cutting it into longer lengths, carting it to the cutting plant, and then re-carting it to its final destination—which makes for double-handling. It is also a mistake to take to the cutting plant light poles which can be cut by a single smack.

Bluegum, pine, and macrocarpa when thick trunks are dealt with should be cut up in short lengths (20ins or 2ft). These trees are difficult to split, and if cut in longer lengths a vast amount of unnecessary labor is frequently entailed—blasting, extra heavy, and strenuous work with the maul and wedges, and extra carting to the cutting plant.

For splitting two-foot blocks the axe in the hands of the expert will generally suffice.

As far as can be managed, blue-gum should almost invariably be taken "off the back." It rarely splits well "off the quarter."

The outer part of the tree next to the bark is usually tougher and more cross-grained.

Red gum appears to be better to split than the blue and therefore should commend itself to those about to plant.

Macrocarpa splits well "off the quarter." The great knots at the junctions of the limbs with the trunks, which often present such a formidable appearance, are not nearly so bad as they appear if care be taken to divide them, equally and split them "off the quarter." The straighter portions of the tree will make excellent rails.

It will often save a lot of hard work if knotty sections of the tree are cut into blocks a little shorter than the average length, and, as it were, "dodged" to facilitate splitting.

(To be concluded.)

## GARDENING NOTES

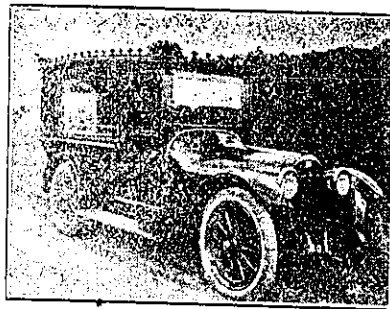
### WORK FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER.

The Vegetable Garden.—Ample scope is usually provided this month for gardening operations, as it will be necessary now to sow vegetable seeds of every description, and to use every opportunity to check the growth of weeds. Sow peas, broad beans, radish, and lettuce for

succession, also a little cabbage, cauliflower, and brocoli seeds. Sow tomato seed in a box, likewise celery, and place them in a frame or greenhouse; the soil should be watered a day or two before sowing, and a sheet of glass placed over each box. In this connection it is advisable to sprinkle dry soil over the seeds when sown, and gently pat down the surface. The seeds thus sown need not be again watered for some time. It frequently happens that in watering small seeds sown in dry soil in boxes they are washed to one side, hence it is necessary to have the boxes placed level, so that the water will be evenly distributed. Leek seed should be sown thinly in a well-manured trench about 12 inches deep; this saves the labor of transplanting into trenches, which is the usual practice. Sow a bed of turnips and beet in well prepared soil. Potatoes may now be planted in small lots at brief intervals.

The Flower Garden.—The sowing of flower seeds in the beds and borders will now claim attention. These require to be sown thinly, and transplanted should they come up in thick clusters. Bedding plants propagated in boxes require to be placed outside to harden, and planted out towards the end of the month. Give a good watering after planting out. Keep the weeds in check: they make great headway at this period of the year. Mow and roll the lawn at least once a week. Should there be any bare patches, sprinkle some seed upon them, rake in, and cover with a light dressing of soil.

The Vinery.—Rub off shoots from the vines, leaving only the strongest, and one to bear the bunch. Water the floor every morning to cause a damp atmosphere: a tub of water kept for the purpose within the vinery will be found convenient. An occasional spraying of the interior is desirable.



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