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FARM FEATURES

Seek Apple Trees To Suit Growers

The apple growers' dream of having full production at five to seven years, continuing 20 years, and replacement with a rotation block of new apple trees is the subject of much research.

Dr. H. B. Tukey, head of the Michigan State College horticulture department, and R. F. Carlson, MSC horticulture research scientist, say that considerable progress has been made in keeping present standard apple trees small and getting them into production early.

Growers rely on well-grown nursery stock, good soil, proper use of fertilizers, water and mulch. But interest still continues in the so-called "dwarf" and "semi-dwarf" fruit trees.

Thus far, reliance for such trees has been on the "Malling rootstocks," 16 in number, which get their name from the East Malling Research Station in England. Rootstocks of these trees are not propagated by seed, but by vegetative means such as stem cuttings, nurse-root grafts, root cuttings, and the like.

To the rootstocks, the desired varieties are budded and grafted. Experiments show the trees develop into a variety of sizes, ranging from a tree no taller than a man to one the size of a standard apple tree.

Tests conducted by the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and reported in the Proceedings of the American Society for Horticultural Science involved 18 stock-scion combinations of apple trees on these Malling rootstocks. Included were 150 trees.

The tests show the trees have responded favorably to growing conditions, relatively light soil and a five-year-old soil, including two dryish seasons.

The trees have grown vigorously and have developed and fruited at about the same ratio as trees of the same type in other locations in the eastern United States.

The Grist Mill

By ED ALCHIN
Oakland County Agricultural Agent

The use of legumes and grasses in farming will be demonstrated and the latest information on hay and grass management will be given out at the 1950 Grass Day program.

In this area the program is scheduled for June 14 on the William Bahnsen farm, located 2 miles south of Plymouth on the corner of Sheldon and Warren Roads in Wayne County.

The event is being planned by the Michigan State College extension service and local planning committees, according to Ed Alchin, county agricultural agent.

Michigan State College extension specialists in cooperation with Mr. Bahnsen prepared demonstration plots of various seedings there last fall for inspection this June by Grass Day visitors. The plots will reveal fertilizer results and erosion control, and will also be used in harvesting demonstrations.

Grass Day, which will be well received by farmers throughout the state, the first two years are conducted to bring farmers up-to-date on the establishment, management, harvesting, and utilization of higher yielding forage of better quality according to P. R. Bleibesheimer, county agent of Wayne County, who is general chairman.

With the emphasis of high crop production, greater attention has been negleced, authorities point out.

They contend that well-balanced rotation, including sod crops and grain and row crops, will produce the most satisfactory results through a period of years.

Weed control, gully control, and efficient use of forage, will be other highlights of Grass Day. New harvesters, mowers and other farm equipment will be brought in for visitors' inspection.

On hand will be MSC extension

specialists to explain the various

demonstrations and to discuss in-

dividual management problems with Oakland County farmers.

Ground Water Level Declines In May

Following a marked jump of 1.18 feet in upstate ground water levels in April, the conservation department's water management show a 1.45 decline, .07 of a foot.

May measurements by state geologists in the north central lower peninsula average .25 of a foot higher than those for the same month last year but are .43 of a foot below the 10-year May average.

On the 10-year average basis, the May drop from May readings approximates only .01 of a foot.

Control of insects in the home begins and ends with good house-keeping. Insecticides do not give complete control unless breeding areas are cleaned up.



ECA PAYS BOTH WAYS. These men, harvesting sugar cane in Humacao, Puerto Rico, symbolize a dual benefit in the Economic Cooperation Administration. The U. S. Department of Agriculture's purchase, on behalf of the ECA, of 220,000 tons of sugar to help feed Western Germany has also given this island's economy a big boost. The American order provides an extra 28,000 working hours for the men and brings in another \$20,000,000 to be used in the Puerto Rican industrialization program.

EROSION TAKES BIG TOLL ON MICHIGAN FARMS

Michigan soils were subjected to the most devastating erosion by both wind and water the past winter, than has occurred in many years.

According to R. G. Hill, Michigan State College extension soil con-

servational services.

As farmers prepare their fields, Hill says they must remember, "the thinner the topsoil, the lower the crop yield." Farmers should take this into consideration when leveling off the gullies and the wind-blown areas in preparing the fields for planting.

Locally, a heavy rain fall and protection by cover crops helped cause the loss of tons of topsoil. Fields located on a slope which were plowed and worked last fall and left bare over winter show the most severe damage, the soil conservationist opined.

A few hours of high winds caused many bare fields to be stripped of their fertility, Hill relates that in addition to the topsoil loss, in early spring, it was not uncommon to see regular "honor banks" of soil along fence rows. Adding to the soil conservation problem is the fact that many grass seedlings failed during the winter. This means less organic matter and plant food for the soil.

Farmers may try to replace lost seedlings on sloped land with cultivated crops. This Hill thinks, would be one of the worst things a farmer could do, as the new seedlings would be covered with grass and legumes along with small grains. The application of soil saving practices must become a regular part of every farmer's program to keep the soil productive," the conservationist insists.

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Final Tally Shows More Deer Hunters

Michigan had more deer hunters in the field last season than expected, or at least more hunting licenses were sold according to final license agent reports to the conservation department.

The department's final tabulation of results show a record 384,652 resident and non-resident (gun) deer licenses sold. The previous high time was established in 1948 when 381,258 licenses were issued.

The good man's hope is laid far — far beyond the away of tempest, or the furious sweep of mortal desolation.

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FIND BUBONIC PLAQUE IN NEW MEXICO RABBITS

New Mexico department of game and fish reports the discovery of bubonic plague among rabbits and warning other states against the importation of rabbits, the conservation department disclosed.

While recognizing the serious development, Michigan game officials see little cause for alarm in Michigan since there is a conservation law which forbids the importation of any wild-life into Michigan without a department permit. Too, there is no reason to attempt to import cottontails since Michigan has a plentiful supply, noted Dr. S. C. Whitlock, head of the game division research staff.

Without attempting to create an unnecessary concern, Whitlock points out that the bubonic plague belongs to the same genus or group as tularemia. About 100 cases of tularemia were reported in Michigan 10 years ago, but since then no considerable number of cases have been reported.

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At the recent Gratiot county beef feeders' tour, McLean's cattle show evidence that the paved lot brought better gains and made "choice time" a simple proposition. McLean's paved two lots, which totalled more than 6,000 square feet in concrete in 1946. It cost \$1,100 in materials and labor, not counting ten days of his own labor and that of his hired man. But the next spring he was able to hold 65 head of choice steers on feed 30 days longer than many other farmers in the locality who did not have paved lots.

The results included a three pound daily gain and a cent a pound advance in price, which McLean figures paid the cost of the lot.

The concrete yard is six inches thick and made up of a fine to one mixture of pit run gravel. He cleans it off twice a week with a scraper on the rear of his tractor and loads the manure into the spreader for use on his land. The paved lot saves much of the value of the fertilizer also, McLean contends.

Farmers in Michigan are showing an increased interest in grass silage. Karl Vary, Michigan State College agricultural economist, says a survey of Michigan farmers showed a 200 per cent increase in the number of farmers harvesting grass silage in 1949 over 1948.

The most common use of grass silage is to put first-cutting hay and excess pasture growth into the silo and feed it to supplement late summer pastures. However, Vary found more and more farmers using grass silage in a winter feed with good results.

Michigan weather conditions for 1949 were favorable for grass silage, but the weather was not good, and the cost of hay was high. About 85 per cent of Michigan's hay crop comes from the first cutting.

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