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Seasonal reminders

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SEASONAL REMINDERS



Tobacco Growing

IN experiments which have been conducted for nine years at the Research Station, it has been found that, on light sandy loam soil, a lupin cover crop produces tobacco of the best quality during the following season. This applies especially to new land and the apparent reason is that lupins, when ploughed into the soil, produce a good bulk of organic matter which creates a better texture in the soil and a better moisture holding capacity. New Zealand blue lupins are recommended and it is advisable to inoculate seed before sowing, especially on new land. Application of fertiliser is 1 cwt. to the acre and seed should be sown at the rate of two bushels to the acre.

Regulation 48c of the Plant Diseases Act, 1914-1935, states:—"The occupier of any land on which the tobacco plant has been grown shall, not later than the 30th day of May in every year, gather and effectively destroy by fire all tobacco plants and parts thereof, and the roots and waste products of all such plants then being on or upon such land or in any place under his control. Provided that this regulation shall not apply to the leaves of tobacco plants which have been gathered and retained for curing, or to the seeds of tobacco plants which have been harvested."

If stalks are pulled and not burnt, there is a good chance of a build-up of insect pests and diseases. Remember that this law has been made for your protection.

Grading Hints.—It has been noted that during recent years, growers have not been giving sufficient attention to

grading their tobacco to type, and they do not realise that this neglect is costing them quite a few pence a pound.

Grading to type means the separation of the cured leaf into similar plant positions. Leaf from the bottom of the plant is entirely different in quality from that from the top. Cured leaf can be graded into four distinct types according to the position on the plant from which it came. They are (1) lugs; from the very bottom of the plant; (2) cutters, which are the prime quality leaf, come from one or two pickings above the lugs; (3) leaf which includes all leaf harvested from the middle of the plant; and (4) tips, taking in the top leaves.

Lugs, or sand lugs as they are generally termed in America, are leaves from the first picking. They are usually rounded, thin-textured leaves, somewhat on the papery side and generally have

some degree of mould or leaf miner damage. In a crop severely damaged by blue mould, lugs are generally primed off during the growing period.

Cutters are the best leaves of the plant. Some crops carry quite a large proportion of cutters, whilst in others, there are relatively few. Cutters are characterised by having a fine, silky texture at the base, slightly coarser at the tip, with more spread at the base of the leaf than in the middle. They are generally lemon to orange in colour, carry very little, if any, green cast and are "stretchy".

The highest proportion of the crop falls into the leaf grade. These are coarser in texture than the cutters, have their greatest width in the middle of the leaf, and have not so much elasticity. Leaf types can carry a high proportion of green cast.

When grading it is advisable to make a clear-cut distinction between each grade. Hesitancy in deciding into which

grade a leaf will fall must mean that divisions between grades are too small. Providing leaf types can be kept separate, there can be a certain margin for colour within a grade.

It is advisable to keep good leaf out of the lower grades. Some growers tend to put quite good sponged leaf into their lowest grade because it is dark in colour even though of a good texture. Any leaf which has a "slaty" grey appearance should be kept in separate grades.

Points to remember in grading, then are:—

- (1) Keep leaf types separate, i.e., lugs, cutters, leaf and tips.
- (2) Do not make divisions between grades too fine.
- (3) Keep good sponged leaf out of low grades.
- (4) Remember that lugs and tips can both be short. Keep them separate in grading.

In the Wheatbelt

MAY is the main seeding month for wheat crops, and varieties should be sown according to the maturity period and the suitability to the particular district. Too early sowing of early maturing varieties may result in losses from septoria or frost injury in the spring.

The best results are obtained when seeding takes place in a moist, well-consolidated seedbed following upon the destruction of weeds which germinated earlier.

Use early and very early varieties of wheat according to district, when conditions cause the seeding to be extended later than normal. Apply superphosphate at the rates recommended for your local conditions.

June should see most of the seeding operations completed. The seeding of wheat crops on ploughed up pasture land should be delayed at least two

weeks after ploughing to minimise damage from webworms.

Clean and store seeding machinery when the seeding programme is completed and make out a list of any new parts required.

Where possible commence fallowing as early as possible is better than late fallow in the drier areas. Empty superphosphate bags should be washed immediately and hung up to dry.

Lambing Time.—During May flock-owners should see that good nutritive conditions are provided for lambing ewes—a grain supplement being essen-

tial if green pasture or early crops are not available. Lambing paddocks should contain shelter belts and the ewes should be inspected frequently.

Lamb marking should be carried out on a warm dry day and on a clean site, not in old yards. After the operation avoid placing lambs on rank wet grazing.

Lay poison baits for foxes and dogs prior to and during the lambing period.

Watch for fly strike as early flush seasons may produce an early winter fly wave.

Avoid over-grazing paddocks just after germination unless such paddocks are intended to be ploughed up and cropped. Rotate the grazing wherever possible as pastures can soon become fouled and stale.

Fumigate and destroy rabbit warrens during the winter months.

In the Orchards

MAY is an important month for harvesting apples particularly such varieties as Granny Smith, Dougherty, Yates and Rokewood. For long storage the fruit must be harvested at the right stage of maturity. In the case of Granny Smiths this is from the third week of April to the third week of May according to districts. Picked earlier the fruit is more liable to superficial scald which however, can be largely controlled by the use of green oil wraps and storing the fruit until the end of May at a temperature in the vicinity of 40° F. followed by storage at 32° F.

Granny Smiths picked late will yellow prematurely and the storage life is reduced. Yates on the other hand will tend to shrivel in store if picked too early and become mealy if harvested too late. The ideal period is from the last week of April to the third week of May.

The harvesting of early citrus fruits such as navel oranges, grapefruit and lemons will commence during this period and care is necessary in the picking and handling to minimise breakdown by moulds. Careful clipping, the use of good picking boxes and a suitable packing bench or sizing machine free from damaging sharp edges will greatly minimise losses.

However, the benefits of good handling may be nullified through contamination by mould spores from the packing-shed equipment such as picking boxes. Before commencing the season, and if possible during the season, a fungicide such as Shirlan W.S.

at a concentration of 1 lb. per 20 gallons, or a solution of 1 gallon of commercial formalin to 49 gallons of water should be used. Spray the packing shed thoroughly including all equipment, and dip all picking boxes in the solution.

Marketing.—All apples, pears and citrus fruits submitted for sale on the local market must conform to standards set down in the grading regulations under the Agricultural Products Act and the provisions of the Fruit Cases Act. This means that the fruit must be sufficiently mature, properly graded and well packed in standard containers bearing information concerning the grower, district, variety of fruit, the grade and size or number of fruit in the case.

Oranges for export are not usually sufficiently mature until about mid June and then must pass the maturity test before shipment is allowed. Fruit

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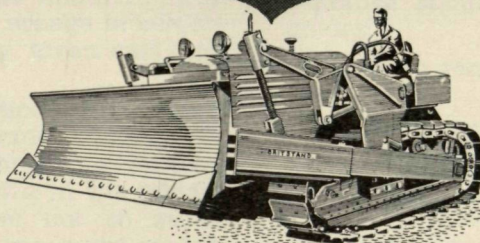
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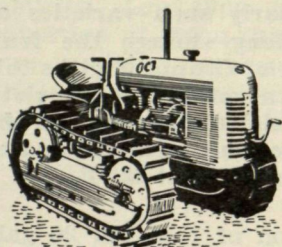
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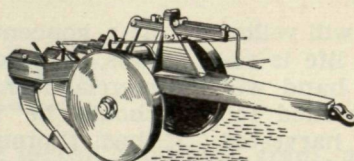
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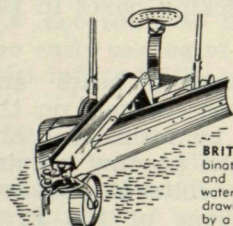
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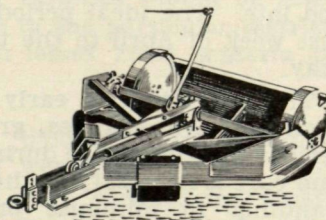


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packed for export must conform to the Exports (Fresh Fruit) Regulations.

A complete range of packing charts for citrus fruits and apples is available from the Head Office of the Department or from district horticultural officers.

Disease and Pest Control.—The main activity in this field will be in the citrus orchard.

Fruit fly can be troublesome in certain seasons in early navels and grapefruit. Normally eggs laid in citrus fruit at this time do not hatch, but the punctures produce an unsightly spotting of the fruit which reduces its market value and renders it unfit for export. Regular baiting should be carried out during the winter on sunny days, placing the bait on the sunny side of the trees.

Sprays for Brown Rot of citrus are normally applied in April, but provided spraying is done before the early winter rains later applications will be satisfactory. A 4:4:40 Bordeaux mixture should be used and for further details a leaflet dealing with this disease is available on application.

Where shothole of stone fruits is difficult to control and the infection is

heavy it is advisable to apply a 6:4:50 Bordeaux mixture just as the leaves commence to fall. Full details of this disease are available in leaflet form.

The Government Plant Pathologist advises that some new fungicides are being tested for the control of shothole, but final recommendations cannot yet be made. For growers who wish to experiment, however, both thiram and ziram compounds are worthy of trial. Thiram is sold commercially as Thiotox, Lantox, etc., and ziram as Ziram 80, etc. These materials should be used according to maker's recommendations.

Pruning.—The pruning of almonds should be commenced towards the end of June, particularly the early varieties which commence to blossom in mid-July.

The renovation of citrus trees may be commenced during May, provided the area is not subject to frosts which would damage subsequent young growth.

Attention to thinning out at regular periods obviates the necessity for heavy cutting.

On the Poultry Farms

THERE is a tendency towards earlier hatching in this State, and June, July and August are considered the optimum months for hatching chickens. Where facilities are available for lighting laying birds during the autumn and winter months, first-cross pullet chicks hatched during June and July are recommended.

Everything should be in readiness in the brooder house to receive the chickens some weeks before the chickens are actually delivered. After cleaning and thoroughly disinfecting the brooder house, the surface of the concrete floor should be limed and four inches of dry jarrah sawdust added. Test the brooders and make certain that they are in reliable working order. See that adequate feeders and watering receptacles are provided.

All laying-shed runs on the farm should be heavily limed, cultivated and sown to a cereal crop following the second rains for the season. Brooder runs and ground on which it is intended to range growing stock subsequently, should receive the same treatment six weeks prior to taking delivery of day-old chickens. Rape makes an excellent crop for brooder house runs. Free range for growing stock is strongly recommended.

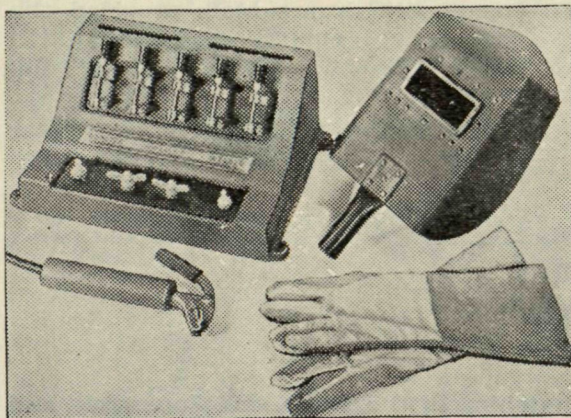
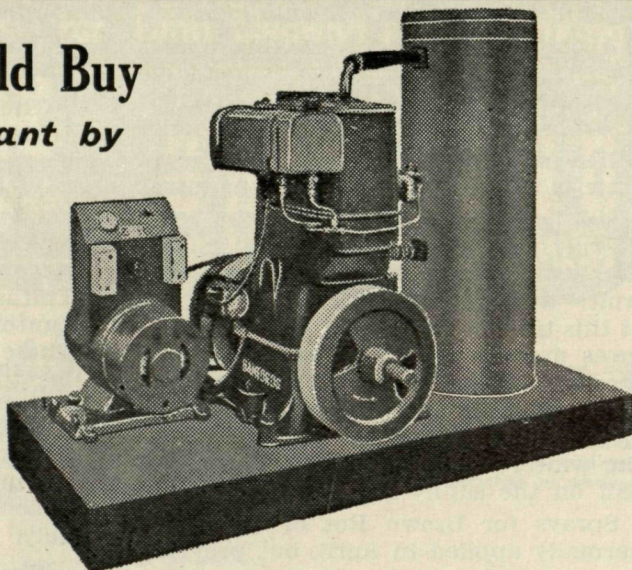
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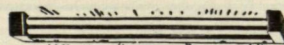
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