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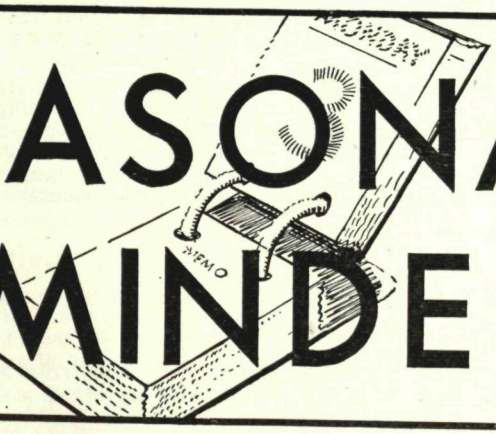
Seasonal reminders

SEASONAL REMINDERS



Entomological Notes

WITH summer drawing nearer, thoughts must be turned to those pests which are most prevalent in the warmer months of the year. Argentine ants will be making their presence felt this month. Now that chlordane is available householders can achieve great relief from this pest by spraying the house foundations, garden borders, fence lines and strips 10ft. apart across lawns and gardens with 2% chlordane.

Aphis on roses and other cultivated plants will cause damage to the young growth. As the temperature increases this will diminish. Should it be necessary to control them a spray containing nicotine sulphate (Black Leaf 40) and soap will prove effective. Parathion and "Hexone" are also very effective but extreme care should be taken when these very poisonous materials are used.

Vegetable and Tobacco Pests.—Potato moth and tobacco leaf miner are one and the same insect. Recent investigations have proved the extreme effectiveness of a 0.1% DDT spray. One part of 20% water soluble emulsion to 200 parts of water will give this concentration.

Cabbage moth and cabbage butterfly can be controlled in the same way as the potato moth. If preferred, a 2% DDT dust may be used.

Stock Pests.—Warm, moist conditions favour a high incidence of blowfly strike. Flocks should be inspected at frequent intervals and where strikes occur a suitable dressing applied.

Orchard Pests.—Most fruit trees are susceptible to attack by the curculio beetle, which feeds mainly on the lower leaves at night and hides in the ground during the day. To reduce this pest, clean cultivation around the base of the trees is necessary. This may be followed by a foliage spray of DDT, or lead arsenate or a ground dressing of BHC (Gammexane) dust.

In the areas where the citrus white fly has appeared and control measures are warranted white oil spray (1 in 40) is effective. Slightly better results may be obtained by using nicotine sulphate with the oil spray.

Orchardists in the Bickley Valley-Carmel area are asked to be on the look out for wilting tips on stone fruit trees caused by the oriental fruit moth caterpillar.

Readers requiring further particulars about the pests referred to may obtain leaflets or more detailed information from the Entomological Branch of the Department of Agriculture.

Wheatbelt Notes

THE month of November should see haycarting completed, with grain harvesting commenced in the early districts. Stud seed plots or areas selected for next season's seed should be carefully harvested to avoid admixture. Order superphosphate requirements for cropping and pastures for the following year.

Merino and Dorset Horn ewes will mate in November, but most crossbreds not until December, which is generally regarded as the main mating month. Other pure British breeds do not come into season until January-February.

During November ewes should be "flushed" on good feed for three weeks prior to, and during, mating. A "scratched-in" crop of oats which has been used for winter grazing and allowed to recover is very suitable for flushing. Ballidu and Fulghum are good recovery varieties of oats.

At least 2% of rams should be used with pure Merinos and 3% for fat lamb production where a concentrated lambing is desired.

Preventive inoculation for toxic paralysis should be carried out about this period if the disease is feared.

Wimmera ryegrass remains green longer than most annual pasture species. Avoid overgrazing so that this plant has an opportunity to set seed.

December should see harvesting completed in most districts and when the harvesting of tall crops is completed it is a good idea to cut some straw and use it for thatching haystacks. Reserve some additional supplies of seed of early wheat varieties in case the following season opens late.

Utilise the stubble paddocks for grazing after harvesting is completed. Check fire-fighting equipment so that it is always ready for use at short notice. Rabbit poisoning with phosphorus baits may be carried out successfully during the summer months.

Soil Conservation Note

OWING to the heavy rains which were registered early this year many paddocks not cropped on the contour principle have suffered heavily and sustained much damage from rilling and gullying.

Gullying, such as that depicted in this photograph, was very common in the early part of the year when many paddocks suffered from heavy rain. Such washouts are particularly dangerous and steps should be taken to avoid further damge.

In some cases the damage has shown up as obvious wide scars with broad silt fans that are easily visible in the mature crop. Most of the rills, though fairly obvious in the early stages of crop growth have now been hidden by the crops and possibly forgotten.

One fears, however, that they will be brought to mind once more during the harvesting season when they are liable to cause severe jolting and jarring with a corresponding increase in damage to harvesting machinery and loss of time in making repairs and awaiting spare parts.

Gullies such as that shown in the photograph can be particularly dangerous and all such washouts should be marked and carefully avoided by harvest machinery.

Where severe water erosion has occurred, farmers are advised to get in touch by mail with the Soil Conservation Service so that arrangements can be made for an officer to give on the spot advice on suitable methods of preventing damage in the future.

Vegetable Notes

WITH the onset of hot weather in November and December, home gardeners should give special attention to the growing of salad crops. Lettuce and tomatoes form the basis of most salads and are particularly valued during the warmer weather.

Six or eight lettuce seedlings planted out at fortnightly intervals will ensure a constant and adequate supply of this vegetable. Seedlings are planted out 10 inches apart in soil which has had compost or well rotted manure incorporated in it. A complete fertiliser, such as Potato Manure A or B, should also be used at the rate of 5 to 7 ozs. per square yard at the time of planting. The most popular lettuce varieties suitable for summer growing are Imperial 847 and Great Lakes, although varieties such as Imperial F, Imperial 44 or Pennlake, a relatively new and promising variety, may be grown successfully.

Tomatoes planted in November will bear fruit during the hottest part of the year and this should be kept in mind in selecting the site for planting. Where possible shade and protection from hot easterly or north-easterly winds should be provided. Varieties grown as a ground crop and suitable for November-December planting are Pearson, Tatura (and Earliana where protection from sun-scald is provided. Marglobe, Rutgers, Grosse Lisse and Wanneroo Late are varieties that may be staked and are suitable for planting at this time.

In most districts, a further planting of beans may be made in November or December. Golden Harvest is the variety recommended for planting at this time, except in humid localities where bean rust may be expected and the variety Westralia should be grown.

Cucumbers and melons are always popular during warm weather and deserve a place in the summer garden. Most of the varieties carried by seed merchants would be suitable for planting in November or December.

POTATO GROWING

During November, digging of early potato crops will be continued in the Harvey, Donnybrook, Benger and Spearwood districts. Growers are reminded that early dug potatoes are particularly prone to heat injury. Where sufficiently mature, tubers should be picked up immediately after digging in order to avoid drying and browning. This is especially important when the air temperature is above 90° F., or the day is dry and windy. On days of excessively high temperatures, growers are advised to restrict digging operations to the cooler parts of the day. Potatoes injured by heat in the field are likely to be attacked by Bacterial Soft Rot and those damaged by drying and browning prior to loading are likely to show stickiness and decay by the time they reach market.

In the irrigation districts, soil preparation should be made during November and December for summer plantings. Most soils will require a watering prior to ploughing. In preparing for the irrigation crop, it is essential to provide for adequate drainage. For this reason, the ground should be ploughed deeply and below the depth at which the seed will be placed and where the subsequent tubers will be formed. A shallow plough sole is very undesirable for irrigated crops of potatoes. Water-logged soils, apart from retarding growth, give rise to potatoes of poor keeping quality.

Foot-Rot in Sheep

ALTHOUGH the incidence of foot-rot has been slowly reduced, the disease is still very prevalent in the areas of higher rainfall, and it is important that there should be no relaxation of the measures which have been adopted for its control and eventual eradication.

The disease is usually at its worst during the spring when wet conditions underfoot and a heavy growth of clover and other herbage favour the spread of infection. Under these conditions a large proportion of the flock, including both adult sheep and lambs, may become affected.

When the feed dried off in summer the disease subsides, and although carriers of infection are still present there may be little or no evidence of foot-rot in the flock. These carriers perpetuate the disease, and with the onset of winter, active cases commence to appear and to increase in numbers until the infection reaches its peak in the spring. Foot-rot results from infection with the microbe *Fusiformis nodosus*, which is always present in the feet of affected sheep, where it may persist for several years. The infection is, however, unable to survive in the soil for more than 7-14 days, and it is consequently possible, by disposing of the whole of an infected flock for slaughter, and restocking after a fortnight with "clean" sheep from a dry inland area, to completely eradicate foot-rot from a property. This method has been successfully employed by a considerable number of farmers in the higher rainfall areas. In a somewhat similar manner the disease may be eradicated by the removal of "carriers" while the disease is quiescent in summer.

The eradication campaign should commence in the winter when the feet should be kept pared and the flock regularly passed through a foot-bath and transferred to spelled paddocks. Any sheep showing evidence of the disease should be isolated in a convenient paddock where the feed is short, and treated in a foot-bath containing bluestone or formalin until recovery is complete and they may be safely returned to the main flock.

It is necessary to emphasise that unless paring is drastic enough to expose all pockets of infection, success in treatment will not be achieved.

By adopting these measures throughout winter and spring it will be possible to keep the disease under control; fewer cases will occur, and this will enhance the prospects of successful eradication when the removal of the "carriers" is undertaken during the summer months.

The detection of these carriers will involve the examination of every foot of every sheep on the property followed by the removal and segregation of every animal showing evidence of infection, or the presence of hidden pockets of infection. The feet of these sheep should be carefully pared, and they should be treated in a foot-bath until freed of infection. Alternatively they may be disposed of for slaughter, or if the numbers are not too great, retained on the property in isolation and used for ration purposes.

In the areas where it exists, foot-rot represents a greater source of loss to the sheep and wool industry than all other sheep diseases. It may definitely be eradicated by one or other of the methods described, and this should be the objective of all sheepmen whose flocks are known to be affected.

Further information is contained in Leaflet No. 668, which may be obtained upon application to this Department.