

*General Agriculture.*

24th April 1926.]

Paper II

[Begin 6-30 A. M.]

1. Fit up a Gorru, set it to suit the crop for which it is intended and work it in the plot allotted. Cover the above plot with a Guntaka.

2. In a plot given, form with a plough the main irrigation channels required to irrigate a crop of Chitrai Cholam.

3. Fit up the parts of a junior hoe and fit it in a position to work it in the field.

4. Oral Examination.

**EDITORIAL NOTES.**

*Coimbatore Betel Vine Station—Vellalur.* The Betel Vine is an important crop in South India and is grown scattered in most districts of the Presidency. It is a delicate crop requiring ample shade and moisture and is cultivated with special care by different classes of skilled betel-vine growers. Owing to the nature of the crop and the intensive cultivation necessary which extends over the whole period of its growth it is planted only in small areas in any one locality. Nellimarla in Vizagapatam, Dra'sharama in Godaveri, Nellikuppam in South Arcot, Ayyampet in Tanjore, Singanallur in Coimbatore, are the most important centres, not to mention isolated plots in practically all other districts. The importance of this crop will be evident from the fact that during the past 30 years during which parcel traffic has become more brisk than ever before, baskets and baskets of green leaves are railed to places as distant as Agra, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow, both through the eastern and western arteries of the Railway system, to be sold at what would be considered fabulous prices in the centres of production. Rolls of single leaves encasing arecanut powder, spices, and chunam are sold under the name of 'paun' at one pice per roll.



About 10 years ago the crop was found affected with some disease which resulted in the progressive reduction of the yield from year to year so much so that during the past few years interpellations in the Council by one of the Coimbatore representatives in the person of Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar focussed the attention of the Agricultural Department and especially of the Entomologist in trying to remedy the existing state of affairs. The earthworm present in the soil of the betel-vine gardens was considered the prime cause but investigation showed that the reduced yield might be due to other causes. It was suggested that eel worms found in the root system of the vine and the general physical debility of the vines might really be the contributing factors for the diminished yield. Proposals were made and several discussions took place until about the middle of last year, when Government sanctioned the opening of a trial station in Vellalur about three miles from Podanur Railway Station, in the heart of the Noyyal valley. Two acres of land were leased out and taken possession of with the standing crops, betel-vine being the chief, which has an advantage in that it could be included in the rotation trial immediately. This also affords opportunities for studying the vine even in the first year and starting the cultural and manuring experiments as occasion demanded. A small laboratory was built which was opened on the 11th of the month in the presence of a large number of cultivators, traders and educated men, by Mr. M. Sambanda Mudaliyar, ex-M. L. A. A scheme for the conduct of experiments was laid out under the joint responsibility of the Entomologist, the Agricultural Chemist, the Mycologist, and the Deputy Director of Agriculture. We guess the actual running of the station will be under the control of the Deputy Director, while the scheme of experiments will be laid out by the experts. For the present, the lands have been taken on lease for a period of 5 years and should the trial prove satisfactory the lease will be extended for a further period of 5 years. A trained agriculturist is in immediate charge of the station to look after the experiments and it is hoped that the station will solve the most pressing problems of the betel-vine grower in this tract.

*A new enemy of Sugarcane:*—Sugarcane was, in the nineties of the last century, subject to 'Redrot' which devastated whole plantations in the Godaveri delta. Recent enquiries have shown that a new enemy is in the field and canes have, in a



number of places, been observed to suffer from what is known elsewhere as 'mosaic' disease,

The characteristic symptoms are a peculiar mottling of the leaves due to innumerable whitish or yellowish linear patches on the leaf surface.

Experiments were devised by the Mycologist with a view to study this disease and to secure a variety or varieties which resist the onslaught of this new enemy. A small plot of garden land (about half an acre in extent) was selected in the Central Farm, Coimbatore, well-prepared and has been planted with 26 varieties of canes which are:—1. Java Hebbal. 2. Fiji C. 3. Red Mauritius. 4. Q 116. 5. Striped Mauritius. 6. Tanna. 7. B 208. 8. B 6450. 9. Butjan. 10. B 3412. 11. B 6308. 12. B 147. 13. Purple Mauritius. 14. D. 625. 15. Chittoor Poovan. 16. Namakabbu. 17. Local Poovan. 18. Vellai. 19. Saccharum Spontaneum. 20. M 55. 21. P. O. J. 2714. 22. J 247. 23. Q 813. 24. D 1135. 25. Fiji B. 26. 131.

It is hoped that encouraging results will be obtained before the next planting season comes on.

*Intermediate in Agriculture:*—The Board of studies in Agriculture seems to have recommended, 2 or 3 years ago, the institution of a separate Intermediate examination in Agriculture. This was referred to one committee after another and in the end, the Academic Council resolved that it was not necessary to institute a separate Intermediate examination for the Agricultural college, as there was sufficient provision in the remodelled Intermediate course for selection of suitable candidates for admission to this College. The new Intermediate course consists of three parts:—Part I—English and Part II Second language—both compulsory for all. Part III consists of three sets of optionals, A, B, and C. Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Natural science, Geography including Physiography are included in A. Logic, Ancient History, Modern History, Indian History, a third language are included in C. of which Agriculture is one. A candidate who wishes to proceed to a Degree in Arts or Science must take at least two optionals in A or B, the third taken from A, B or C. A candidate who seeks admission to the B. Sc. Degree should have apparently taken two optionals from A, and the third from A, B, or C.



Our experience of the present group I or group II candidates limited as it is, only to three or four batches is not unfavourable; and the intermediate examination which is good enough as qualifying for admission to the Engineering and Medical colleges is apparently good enough for an agricultural course. At any rate the remodelled Intermediate gives a wider choice for the Principal of this college to choose his students from.

*B. Sc. Ag. Further Attendance:*—Regulation 9 of Chapter XXV, Vol. I of the University Calendar has been removed by the Academic Council, on the recommendation of the Board of Studies in Agriculture. The result is that students who fail in either part of the B. Sc. Ag. examination need not undergo a further course of instruction at the college. While a further attendance, involving an additional year's expenditure, is excused by the University, we hope that students who may fail in either part of the examination will realise that, in other own interests, it is best that they do re-join, specially as the course is fully a practical one, and nearly as many marks are allotted for the Practical as for the Theoretical portion of the examination. It is well to remember that B. Sc. Ag. examination is not an examination which could be passed by a candidate cramming at home. After all, when a failed candidate does not rejoin the College, he rarely keeps up regular, and systematic habits of study.

*The Madras Village Calendar 1926.* The annual publication has kept up its standard of excellence. This year there is an agreeable assortment of popular articles and one special feature seems to be the very large number of contributions on co-operation from eminent co-operators and notes on the Industrial Engineering branch of the department of Industries, which will help people anxious to obtain information. The outstanding article is the one dealing with Land Mortgage Banks which needs careful perusal.