

Putnam County Farm Front News

Grape Vines Need Pruning

Grape vines will not "bleed to death" from proper pruning. Vines are easily pruned, and the job should be done annually, says Agricultural Agent D. J. Holmes tells home gardeners. The grape bears fruit from the growth that was made last year, not from the older wood, as some think. The more of the two years or older wood that can be removed, the better it will be for the vine and for the fruit.

Mr. Holmes makes the following pruning suggestion. First, cut four good, strong canes from the past seasons wood that carry 12 to 15 buds per cane. These canes should be close in to the main trunk and all other

growth should be removed with the exception of four or five short spurs of two buds each which also are located near the main trunk. These are called renewal growths and are used for the following year's crop.

The long fruiting canes that were saved should then be cut back to eight to 10 buds. This will leave 32 to 40 fruiting buds and eight to 10 growth buds, which are as much as a well established vine should have. Prune grapes when the wood is not frozen, during late February to early April. Bleeding is not as serious as some believe.

Further information on grapes is contained in Purdue Extension Bulletin 267. A copy may be obtained, free of charge, from the county agricultural extension office.

It costs only a few cents to rid cows of lice and grubs but the unthrifty condition resulting from failure to do so may cut milk returns by many dollars.

PUTNAM COUNTY AGENT



DANIEL J. HOLMES

RAISING CHICKS

Most of the chicks reared on farms are now bought "ready-made." Breeders and hatcherymen often supply good chicks at less cost than the farmer can produce them. Unless the home flock can be carefully blood tested for pullorum disease, it is safer to purchase chicks from a producer who does reliable test-

ing, says D. J. Holmes, county agricultural agent. By purchasing baby chicks one can have them all of one age and the pullets will come into lay about the same time.

Chicks are an investment. Cheap chicks often prove expensive. It costs money to produce desirable chicks. Livability, growth, and egg production, rather than a low price, should be the measures. A few cents extra per chick may be repaid many times in results. Orders placed well in advance enable the producer to supply chicks at the desired time.

The quality of the chicks at the start often determines the difference between failure and success. It is unreasonable to expect good equipment, efficient feeding methods, and careful management to overcome inherent weakness or disease infection which the chicks may have at hatching time.

Light breeds (Leghorn, etc.) require about six months to mature, while general purpose breeds, such as Plymouth Rocks, need seven months. Hence, for September and October egg production March and April hatchlings are most suitable. Under special conditions it may be advantageous to hatch earlier or later.

Suitable brooding equipment is a big asset. Satisfactory equipment provides comfort for the chicks and convenience for the country keeper, and may prevent serious chick losses. The right kind of equipment is a good investment. Expensive equipment is not needed. The portable brooder house, 10-12 feet in size, has demonstrated its value.

Prepare the brooder in advance. Before the chicks arrive the brooder house must be prepared for them by a thorough cleaning mechanically and a good disinfecting. Shavings, ground corn cobs, clean chopped straw, clover, or alfalfa makes a satisfactory litter. It should be one or two inches deep. A thin layer of clean, dry sand under the litter makes cleaning easier. An inch of sand with no other litter may be used. Dirty, dusty, or moldy litter may cause trouble. On many farms litter is replaced twice a week during the first 10 or 12 weeks and every week or ten days during the rest of the growing season.

The good poultry raiser regulates the brooder temperature before the chicks arrive. When the thermometer is hung at the edge of the hover, with the bulb about two inches from the floor, a temperature of at least 90 degrees seems desirable at the start. For winter brooding this may be increased to 95 or even 100 degrees. After the first week, the temperature should be gradually reduced about five degrees a week, under ordinary weather conditions. The comfort of the chick is a better guide than a thermometer. The brooder room itself should be kept cool by adjusting the ventilation by means of the window.

Chick Guard Useful First Few Days. A chick guard, 12 to 18 inches high, made of half-inch screen (hardware cloth) or of inch-mesh chicken wire, is useful in keeping the chicks near the source of heat for the first few days. With a guard the chicks soon learn the source of heat and are less likely to start crowding in a corner of the house. The guard is placed about two feet from the edge of the hover during the daytime and drawn up for the night, according to weather conditions. Clean bur-lap bags pinned (using clothes pins or nails) on the outside of a wire guard will help conserve the heat and prevent floor drafts.

Crowding Prevented by Good Management. Heavy losses often occur when chicks "pile up" or crowd along the walls or in the corners of the brooder house. Once begun, crowding is hard to stop, but experience has shown that good management usually prevents this trouble.

Crowding is less likely when only 250 to 300 chicks are brooded together. Crowding is rare when the brooder room is cool at bed time and there is sufficient warmth under the hover to keep the chicks comfortable at the edge of it. With ample heat under the hover chicks are less likely to learn to huddle. In keeping the brooder room cool, windows or doors should not be opened so as to cause floor drafts. Chicks tend to crowd on the side of the stove away from the drafty area.

The chicks should be watched closely at roosting time for the first few nights, making sure that the stove and the room temperature are properly regulated so that the chicks roost in a uniform circle at the edge of the hover. A 50 to 60 inch hover for the brooder stove permits the chicks to form a large circle so that those on the outside may keep comfortable. A stove with a large capacity for coal (50 lbs. or more) is highly desirable.

Other suggestions in the control of crowding include darkening the brooder house just before nightfall and the use of artificial lights. It is much better to prevent crowding by good management than to rely on emergency measures after the trouble begins.

Don't Let Fire Go Out Too Soon. Some artificial heat should be provided until all the chicks have learned to roost, and both stove and windows should be regulated according to weather conditions and the comfort of the chicks. It is often expensive to "save" fuel by carrying the fire too low or letting it go out when the chicks are not sufficiently feathered to stand the weather conditions. Ordinarily heat should be provided until the

chicks are 8 to 10 weeks old, but the behavior of the chicks is a better guide than an arbitrary schedule. When some of the chicks have learned to roost it is possible to have the room too cool, in which case colds may result.

Get Chicks Outside When Young. In a week or ten days the chicks learn where to get warm and are ready to be taught to go outside in the direct sunshine. The sooner chicks are taught this, the better. If kept inside too long they will not go out readily. Toe-picking and cannibalism are rare when chicks have access to range, but often develop when chicks are kept inside too long.

The value of clean ground in preventing chick diseases and parasites and for promoting excellent growth and development cannot be over-emphasized. Many disease germs, coccidia, and eggs of intestinal parasites may live a long time in the soil. A practical way to meet this situation is to start the chicks each year upon an area convenient to the dwelling, but large enough for one half to be used one year and the other half the following year. A fence will prevent the chicks from using more than half the area.

When warm weather arrives the brooder stoves should be cleaned and put away; the brooder houses can be moved to a new growing range such as corn field or pasture. The starting lot can then be plowed, planted to a cultivated crop, and later seeded to grass. Chicks should never be grown on ground which has had poultry or poultry manure on it within the previous 12 to 18 months.

Feed Should Be Provided When Chicks Are Placed in Brooder. When chicks are received from a distance and their exact age is unknown, it is advisable to feed and water them immediately. When chicks are first placed in the brooder, feed and water should be available, or they may fill up on litter or sand or pick at each other. The first feed may be placed on box lids (with side an inch or so high), egg case cup flats, or paper plates. These should be removed and burned before they get badly soiled. After two or three days shallow troughs may be used but a few paper containers should be used until all the chicks can get the feed in the troughs. One trough 20 to 30 inches long should be provided for every 50 chicks and more troughs added as the chicks become larger. Half-gallon fountains for water or milk should be provided for each 50 chicks. When the chicks are a week or ten days old one large fountain for water saves time for the attendant.

While fresh green feed may not be absolutely necessary in feeding chicks it is a good source of certain vitamins. When green feed can be provided without much expense or labor, it may conserve other feeds to advantage.

age. A good alfalfa, clover, or bluegrass range is undoubtedly an asset under most conditions.

One of the principal values in feeds such as alfalfa, clover, grasses, rape and kale is substance called carotene from which the chicken makes vitamin A. Feeds which lack green or yellow color, such as white cabbage, beets and turnips have little or none. Yellow corn is a fair source of vitamin A, but white corn, wheat and oats have none. Skim milk and buttermilk have little vitamin A, because this vitamin is associated with the butterfat, which has been mostly removed.

Ultra-violet rays of sunshine provide the chicks with vitamin D, necessary for the utilization of calcium and phosphorus in bone formation. Rickets, which has the symptom leg weakness, often results where chicks are kept away from direct sunshine. Most glass filters out the ultra-violet rays of the sun. Windows made from glass substitutes help only partially in solving the vitamin D problem when chicks receive no exposure to direct sunshine.

Much has been said and written to lead one to believe that cod liver oil must be fed to chickens. Under ordinary farm conditions chickens may have access to direct sunshine when a week or 10 days old and nothing is then gained by feeding cod liver oil. When weather or disease-infested soil necessitates confinement from direct sunshine, one may substitute some source of vitamin D, such as tested cod liver oil, cod liver oil stearin, sardine oil, or some concentrated extract. On the basis of one per cent of 85-D unit cod liver oil in the ration the choice should be made according to cost.

It should be emphasized that cod liver oil and similar products

vary in quality and add to the cost of feeding; at best they are only substitutes for direct sunshine. Yellow-skinned varieties of chickens fed cod liver oil in liberal amounts may have pale flesh-colored legs, beaks, and face parts, which may mean a lower price for broilers. Chickens fed cod liver oil have been found to have a fishy flavor. If the oil is discontinued for two weeks prior to slaughter the flavor disappears. Direct sunshine has none of these difficulties and costs little; it should be used wherever possible.

Complicated and expensive rations are not necessarily superior to less expensive rations. A great variety of needs is unnecessary, but all of the essential nutrients and vitamins must be provided. The feeder should adopt some tried formula and method, but should avoid making changes in amounts or substituting one feed for another during the brooding season. Economy of this sort often proves costly in results obtained.

Many ready-mixed feeds are available to farmers. Like other products, these feeds vary in price and merit. Decisions as to their use are based upon price, performance and confidence in the manufacturer and dealer. Where the price is little above that of the ingredients for a tested home-mixed ration giving similar results, one would earn little by mixing his own rations. One should not buy feeds on price alone, unless they are practically identical products. A high price is no assurance of exceptional merit.

There are many satisfactory methods of feeding chicks. Any successful method must supply the nutrients and vitamins shown to be necessary for desirable growth and development.

(Continued On Page 4)



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