

ONION SEED PRODUCTION

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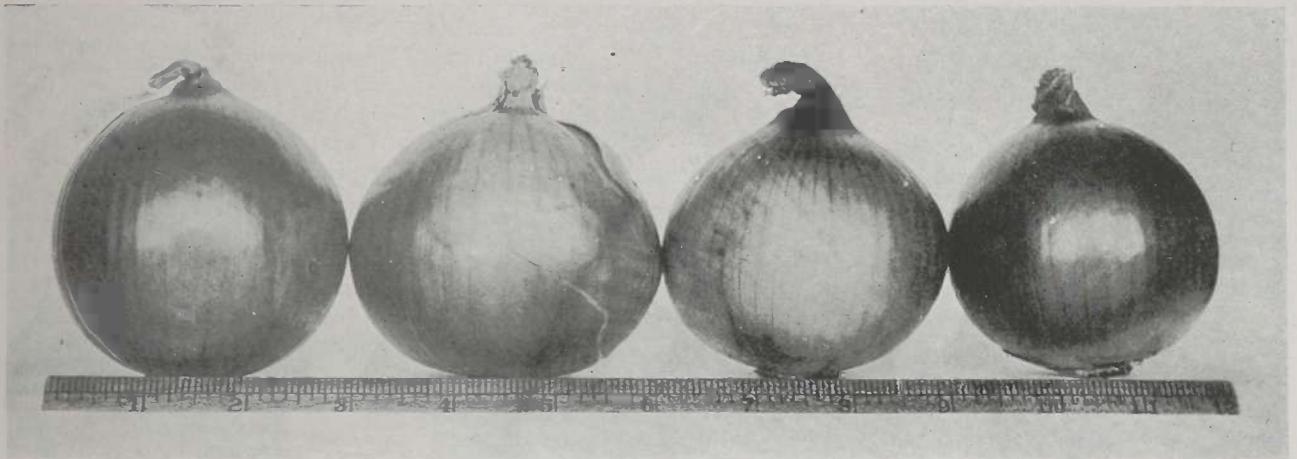
Better Adapted Seed Strains at Lower Cost the Result of Home Grown Seed—Care in Bulb Selection and Methods of Harvesting and Curing the Important Factors in Successful Production of Onion Seed

THE onion industry in the State of Arizona is drawing much favorable attention and many of our better farmers are taking it up either as a sideline or as a major industry. The cultural phase has passed through the experimental stage and definite lines of cultural practice have been laid down for the production of the crop. Little attention, however, has been paid to the selection of bulbs for seed growing so that seed strains can be produced that will be better adapted to our

3. Bulbs slightly smaller than those desired in the crop should be saved as mother bulbs.
4. All mother bulbs should be firm and free from insect and mechanical injuries.
5. Select at least three times as many bulbs as needed.

The next step is that of curing out and storage. Handle the seed bulbs carefully to prevent injury and cure separately from the general crop, being sure that they are fully cured before putting in storage. The best

the soil is rich and well drained. Work down to a garden consistency and lay off in ridges as for transplants. The distance between the rows is that best suited to the cultural tools used and the distance apart in the row is that of diameter of the bulbs. Use only the bulbs that have stored through the winter in good shape and are hard and firm. As there is an inherent quality of dormancy in onions that varies with different strains and individuals, it is important to cultivate the strain



Four Onions to the Foot—Note the Uniformity of Above Bulbs Which are Ideal for Seed Production

local conditions than the ones used at present. In addition to the development of better adapted strains there is an economic element of saving in the home production of seed. Why pay seed companies when better seed may be produced on the farm with a little care in its production?

The most important step in the production of onion seed is that of bulb selection. These mother bulbs should be selected at harvest time and briefly the points to observe in their selection are as follows:

1. Select bulbs of uniform maturity.
2. Only bulbs typical in shape and color should be kept.

of care is none too good, and any bulbs injured or sunburned in curing should be at once discarded. As soon as the curing operation is complete, pack the bulbs in slat crates and store away until planting time. The storage should be dark, dry, well ventilated, and one that will maintain a cool uniform temperature. Light and varying temperatures will induce early sprouting. An adobe cellar or house can easily be made into an ideal storage house.

In the southern valleys the mother bulbs should go to the field early in February at about the same time the young seedlings are transplanted to the field. The field is selected where

that will remain dormant the longest. In this way the storable quality in the onion will be developed. The bulbs are planted to a depth that will allow the covering of the entire bulb.

Cultural practices for the seed bulbs are the same as for the general crop with especial care being given to the control of insects and the prevention of injury by cultivation. Good clean cultivation in addition to keeping the soil in a uniformly moist growing condition is also necessary.

As soon as the seed heads are formed they should be carefully watched so that harvest will be made at the proper time. Seed heads

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should be harvested when the seed is in the dough stage. Contrary to general opinion this does not come when the seed turns black but quite some time later. A good rule to follow is not to cut the seed heads until some shattering occurs, and in this way thoroughly mature seed will be obtained. Another method is to crush some of the seed and if the interior is of a tough and doughy consistency they are ready to be harvested.

In harvesting the heads the best plan is to cut several inches of the stalk with the head which will facilitate handling. The heads are spread out on burlap or cloth covered trays or on a cloth covered table in a cool shady place to dry. Plenty of ventilation is necessary and the heads should be turned every few days to speed up the drying and to prevent heating. Do not spread the heads over two layers deep or heating is apt to take place. As soon as well dried the seed should be threshed out and stored away.

Threshing is usually accomplished on a small scale by rubbing the seed out by hand and running them through a small hand mill to get rid of the chaff and trash. Careful winnowing by hand will serve the same purpose but is a very tedious process and much of the seed will be lost. Another method in general use is to pour the seed into a tub of water and stir well. Allow the seed to settle and skim off the chaff, trash and light seeds. Drain off the water and spread the seed thinly on cloth covered trays and dry thoroughly in a cool, shady well ventilated place. Stir the seed on the trays several times a day and allow to dry until there is no doubt of their being thoroughly devoid of moisture. If stored in a damp condition heating will occur and the vitality will be seriously impaired. Store in sacks or open containers in a dry well ventilated location where the temperature will be uniformly cool. Watch carefully for several days to see if any heating occurs and if so spread out and dry again. Seed stored in this manner will retain vitality and give excellent results when planted.

FRESH FRUITS HELP TEETH

Dentists now come to the front with authoritative statements that fresh fruits are the best desserts for the teeth and that they act as a dentifrice. Pastry and other sweets are well known to be not so good for the teeth.

Fresh fruits have a cleansing effect on the teeth, the dentists say, not only because of their cellulose fibers but also because the vegetable acids they contain stimulate a flow of saliva which keeps the mouth clean. Fruit juice in infancy is known to be a valuable adjunct to the proper development of the teeth and continued through childhood to furnish the sweets for which the youngsters crave instead of candy keeps up the work of keeping the teeth sound, and continued into adult life serves the excellent purpose of keeping them clean and sound.—Illinois State Horticultural Society.

FARSIGHTED INDIAN

An Oklahoma editor tells of an old Indian who came into his office to pay for his paper. The editor took the money then the Indian wanted a receipt. The editor tried to talk him out of it. Mr. Indian insisted. After making it out the editor wanted to know why he was so persistent about wanting a receipt. The Indian said: "Me die sometime. Go to big gate and St. Peter ask if I been good Indian. I say yes. He say did you pay editor for paper. Say yes. He say where is receipt. I no have it. I have to run all over hell to find you and get receipt."—The Argonaut.

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