

(2029)

Sainfoin, or Sainfoin, the name given by the French, and continued by us to a species of plant, frequently used for the food of Cattle, either fresh or dried; it is called holy hay, or wholesome hay, from its excellent nutritive quality. The stalks of the plant are commonly about two feet long, but they grow sometimes to five or six feet, and it has tufts of red flowers of three, four, or five inches in length.

It will make forty times greater increase in poor land the common turf, arising from its long perpendicular root, which is of the kind called tap roots, that sinks to a great depth to attract its nourishment. The length of this root is scarcely to be credited but by those who have seen it; it is frequently drawn out of the ground to the length of twelve or fourteen feet, but it is said to be often thirty feet or more in length.

It always succeeds where its roots run deep, and produces the best crops upon land where there is no hard under soil to obstruct their passage. An under soil of clay by retaining the water and chilling the roots may kill these plants.

The best way of sowing it is in drills, the seed should not be covered with more than half an inch of soil, about a bushel of seed to an acre is the proper calculation if the seed be good; it should be sowed early in the spring, and not with the Corn.

The method of knowing whether the seed is good, is by sowing a certain number of the seeds and seeing how many plants are produced by them. The external signs of the seed being good are, that
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the husk is of a bright colour, and the kernel plump, of a light grey or blue colour, and sometimes of a shining black, as that arises from receiving wet in the field, not to being half rotted in the heap.

If the kernel be cut a-crope, and appear greenish and fresh, it indicates its being good; if of a yellowish colour, and friable, and look thin and pitted, these are bad signs; when judiciously managed four gallons of good seed to an acre is sufficient.

The best mode of calculating how many plants should be allowed to a Perch, is to compute how much hay each single plant will produce; for if kept single, and well cultivated, they will all be large ones. Without culture they never arrive at a fourth part of the size that they do with it. The hay of a large single cultivated plant will weigh more than half a pound, an hundred and twelve plants upon a square perch, weighing but one quarter of a pound each, amount to two tons per acre. If Saint John be planted on some sorts of ground early in the spring, and hoed, it will sometimes produce a crop the following summer; on good land it will yield two very good crops annually, with moderate culture and management.

The crop must be moderate the first year, it will increase amazingly every succeeding year, when well hoed it will grow as much in a fortnight as otherwise in six weeks; the quick growth not only makes the plant large, but better nourishment to the Cattle, whether eat green, or made into hay.

No Cattle to be suffered to come on the Saint Joins
the first Winter, and Sheep not the following Summer
and Winter; it ought to be manured the first Winter.

It may be mowed before in bloom, and is admirable
food for horned cattle, and yields a better second crop
than if allowed to stand till in bloom.

In making it into hay care must be taken, that the
flowers do not drop off, as cattle are very fond of them,
and they induce them to eat the rest of the plant:
Mr. Fall says that this hay is so nutritive, that he
kept a team of horses in good order though they
worked hard the whole year, without giving them any
oats; but the hay of this plant can never be so good
as when cultivated with the hoe; for in the common
husbandry, it blooms almost as soon as out of the
ground.

The Land to be thoroughly cleaned from Weeds,
 the Linfain sowed as early in March as the land
 can be prepared for it, a bushel of seed is sufficient
 for an acre.

If the Land is dry and fine, little harrowing will
 be necessary to cover the seed, which is the most difficult
 operation; the seed being very light it is not easy
 to cover it, and if heavy harrows are used they are
 apt to bury the seed too deep.

When the Plants are five or six inches above
 ground, they should be set out regularly with an
 hand hoe, leaving the strongest plants at about
 eight inches distance every way from each other.

Linfain succeeds best when sowed alone, it
 should be dressed most sparingly with fine powdered
 Manure, coal ashes, root, and such like, are the
 most proper.

Cattle must not be suffered to feed on it for a
 couple of years.

The continuing annually to hoe the weeds will
 greatly benefit the Linfain.

Memorandum