

# **SUGAR BEET, HINTS ON CULTIVATION**

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Sugar Beet, Hints on Cultivation by Carlyn

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**CARLYN**

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# SUGAR BEET

## HINTS ON CULTIVATION

By

CARLYN, *Author*

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## Preface

THIS booklet is published chiefly for the purpose of giving the farmers a general outline of the question of sugar beet growing.

There cannot possibly be any hard and fast rules to be complied with on anything pertaining to agriculture, as many things depend on climatic conditions, the constitution of the soil, and other important points for which generations of farmers in every county have had to make allowance.

It has been alleged that sugar beet growing should be conducted on similar lines to that of mangels. To the English farmer this would simply mean the substitution of one root crop for another of a similar nature—with this difference, that sugar beet will secure him a return in money without having to transform

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his crop into meat, and thereby depend on the fluctuations of the meat market for his profits.

It must be remembered, however, that sugar beet growing has features of its own and, contrary to mangels, the root grows deep in the ground. Therefore to obtain satisfactory results the soil must be ploughed deeply and whenever possible up to 10 in. or 12 in. This deep ploughing is the secret of sugar-beet cultivation, and when to this is added the right kind of manure for the soil, a very large return for the outlay may reasonably be expected.

We have purposely given no indications in this booklet as to the cost of cultivation and the yield per acre. The chief reason for this is that sugar beet has never been grown in England except on small patches of ground for the purpose of experiment, and therefore no reliable data are available for the time being.

On the Continent those figures can be obtained, as sugar beet cultivation has



been carried on on a large scale for the last twenty or thirty years, the total acreage being at present approximately four million acres—that is, nearly ten times as much as the whole acreage under mangel cultivation in England.

Another important point with regard to sugar beet cultivation is that this root can be grown year in year out in the same ground, and it will be found that after a few years the crop will give a better yield than at first. It stands to reason, of course, that proper manure must be applied so as to give back to the soil what has been taken out of it.

But again the secret of such results is, as we have said before, deep ploughing.

We have, in the course of our experiments carried out in England, met many farmers, and though all were ready and willing to listen, and willing to try the new crop themselves, consideration was given to the large acreage which would be required to feed a sugar factory in a given district—the general impression being that it might displace in time the

cultivation of mangels, and so affect the farmers in many indirect ways which were not apparent at first. Another difficult point to contend with is the belief in many counties that the farmers may expect anything from 35 to 70 tons of mangels per acre. We even once met a farmer who had just grown mangels about the size of a man's fist, and he swore that he got 35 tons per acre. We know that he probably meant 35 small cart loads, transformed into tons in the heat of discussion; but so long as such fanciful figures are rooted firmly in the minds of those interested in agriculture, it is, of course, hopeless to try to lay the mangel ghost by any manner of means.

But in the same way as the yield of sugar beet on the Continent is taken on an average of four million acres, we think it wise to tackle the mangel ghost on the average yield in England.

From the figures given by the Board of Agriculture it is shown that the average area returned as under mangels in England for the ten years 1900-1909 was

409,230 acres, the average annual yield being 20·04 tons per acre.

From these figures we feel perfectly satisfied that the advantages of sugar beet cultivation over that of mangels would be apparent, and that the farmer in growing sugar beet instead of mangels will save himself a waste year in his cycle of crops, and thus make an extra profit, which is not the case with mangels.

We hope that this booklet may be found useful, and we take this opportunity of heartily thanking the many farmers who have earnestly taken up this question of sugar beet growing in England, and have afforded us the means and necessary knowledge of local conditions, fully trusting that they were helping the wheel along the path of progress.

LONDON,

*July, 1910.*

CARLYN.