

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



A Visit to Moreton Farm

Remarkable changes are wrought by time. Nearly seventy years ago the father of the writer was associated with Joseph Harris in the publication of a horticultural paper, credited with being the best published at that time.

Later, one became an editor of the Rural New Yorker and the other of the American Agriculturist. After that both engaged in the seed business and both concerns are still flourishing.

It is sufficient for the reader to know that these remarks are from a totally disinterested person, who finds it pleasant to record the success of a family, who in a way has been a neighbor for nearly three-quarters of a century.

It seems proper to say here that it is Mr. S. M. Harris who is at the head of the Joseph Harris Company and he it is who insists on the old fashioned honesty and scrupulous care with which the business is conducted. I say this voluntarily for I not only know the man, but I know the men he employs. There is a son, Joseph Harris coming along who, later will, no doubt, head the establishment as his father does now.

Moreton Farm is located on the Buffalo road, about seven miles from Rochester, at Coldwater, N. Y.

The seed farms are on both sides of the road. The dry houses, warehouses, greenhouses and office building are together near the comfortable old homestead surrounded by great shade trees and well kept lawns. Here Mr. Harris constantly applies himself as no one could who had not real love for the work in which he was engaged and which seems to be contagious, for the employees all show the same spirit.

Visitors are always welcome and when in that locality a visit to Moreton Farm is well worth while.

In my tour of inspection I was impressed with the great field of Bender's Surprise Muskmelon. It is wonderfully fine flavored melon, and I predict it will be a general favorite when it is better known.

There were acres of Beets and Tomatoes growing for seed, and every plant of vegetables or flowers is carefully examined to see that it is true to the variety, otherwise out it comes and is destroyed. This is what is called "rogueing" and on the care with which it is done, depends the quality of the seed. Nature in plants as in animals, is wayward, and unless varieties are carefully watched they revert and become poor or mixed, and that is why seed production on too large a scale is likely to result in poor quality. It is also why carefully grown stock is by far the most desirable. Particular growers know that it pays to obtain the best seeds which it is the aim of this establishment to produce.

The corn fields were equally interesting. Whipple's Early Sweet Corn, an evergreen type, matures as early as the small eared kinds, but the ears are large and resemble Evergreen, 7 to 8 inches long, having 14 to 18 rows of deep kernels. It is tender, sweet, and delicious. It will surely prove a money maker for those who grow for market and it is superior for the home table.

Harris' Earliest Pepper is grown by the acre and still never quite sufficient seed can be produced to supply the demand. It seems to be the only pepper that can be depended on as far north as Rochester. The plants, only about a foot high seem hardly able to support the great quantity of peppers they produce.

The trial grounds of several acres, included some forty varieties of corn and tomatoes, twenty plants of a kind.

The fields of flowering plants were a blaze of color, most of them growing for seed crops.

The Larkspurs were magnificent, deep blues, light blues, deep pinks and lustrous carmines.

The flowers are rogued quite as carefully as the vegetables.

The Centaureas, or Batchelor's Buttons include the double blue, much handsomer than the old single variety, blooming all through the summer and autumn. The doubles also include colors ranging from white to deep pink and lavender to blue.

The long rows of Salpiglossis were a sight, in remarkable shades and beautiful markings. The ground colors differed widely, of yellow, blue, red, purple, etc., veined and marked with a great variety of colors. I wonder why these beautiful flowers, so easily grown, are not better known.

The double Giant Zinnias were fully five inches in diameter and perfectly double, resembling small Dahlias and of all hues, from the brightest colors to the popular art shades.

There were great fields of Asters of all varieties and strains and of almost every color of the rainbow.

Some plants that had produced flowers of unusual size or color were covered with a large frame, over which netting was spread to keep the insects from hybridizing the flowers or where artificial hybridizing had been resorted to, in an effort to produce new varieties.

There are great fields of Gladioli, including all the popular new varieties and varieties of special merit. Perennial Phlox of carefully selected varieties and other perennial plants, of which *Doronicum Excelsum* stood out prominently as one of the showiest. *Heuchera* or Coral Bells were particularly attractive, also, the delicate *Platycodons* or Japanese Bell Flowers.

The strawberry beds were extensive and in fine condition, but unfortunately for me, the season for fruit had passed.

One of the buildings used as a store house is over a hundred years old, but still in good repair.

The dry houses have open floors, covered with wire netting on which the late maturing crops are placed and the seeds complete the drying process with the aid of gentle heat from furnaces in the basement.

The fanning mills with which seed is cleaned, have been greatly improved in recent years and the refuse is exhausted by suction, quite differently from the dusty machines I remember working at when young. The improved machinery gives results that benefit all who plant seeds.

Owing to the personal reference occurring, the writer subscribes himself, as a lover of horticulture,

NEIGHBOR

FAITH

You can tell very little by looking at seeds what they will produce. It is a matter of faith in the man who raises or sells them. The faith of the public is a seedsman's most valuable asset; the hardest to acquire and the most easily lost. It is acquired only by the most painstaking care to produce and sell only seeds that will give a good account of themselves. That is no small task.

A seed is a wonderful thing, when you come to think of it. It contains within itself a plant whose form and character are largely determined by inheritance, not only from the plant that produced the seed, but from some other plant whose pollen may have been brought to the flower by a honey-hunting bee or a passing breeze.

Who can tell just what a certain seed will produce? It takes many years of careful work to establish a "fixed" strain, which is fixed only in the sense that seeds if carefully grown will produce plants of quite uniform character. If care is relaxed for only a short time the strain will deteriorate rapidly.

To keep seeds up to the highest standard is our task. How well we perform it determines the seed buyers' faith in us and our success.

Some Experiences

"In reviewing my garden operation for the past season I cannot allow the occasion to go by without paying you tribute of appreciation.

I have observed and have freely commented upon it to my friends, how thoroughly your representations as set out in your catalogue can be relied upon, and with what confidence your assurance of quality can be accepted.

My experience with your seeds has been such, that in so far as your are able to supply them all my requirements for the future will be placed with you in the way of both vegetables and flowers."

EMERSON W. PRICE, Charlevoix, Mich., Oct. 18, 1921.

"I have purchased seeds and bulbs from our largest seedsmen for the past forty years with varying success, and I am pleased to tell you unsolicited that my first purchase of you has proved exceptionally satisfactory. Your Buttercup Sweet corn is the best I ever raised, as well as your Macomber turnip. Your aster seed has produced excellent results with me. Testing your seeds for germination shows your honesty as well as guarantee of quality."

L. J. UPHAM, Webster, Mass., Oct. 3, 1921.

"Your seeds proved the best agricultural investment I ever made. Your motto might well be "By our seeds ye shall know us."

DR. E. P. BAGG, JR., Holyoke, Mass.

"Kindly send on this order of corn as I want to be sure of getting your seed, as I did not get yours last year and had no crop. Your seeds are cheap at any price."

A. H. ELSCHNER, Stratford, Ont.

"I thought I would let you know what luck I had with your seeds last spring never having planted any of them before, except Bender's Surprise Melon, which I tried in 1920.

I planted 120 hills of Buttercup corn, and not expecting every kernel to come up, I planted six in a hill, and there was not a single hill that did not have six plants come up in it. I found it as fine flavored as Golden Bantam, and much larger ears, and we had it ready to eat August 1st, which was one week earlier than I ever had Golden Bantam.

I planted one quart of Eclipse peas and one quart of Laxtonian in rows six feet apart, and planted hills of Bender's Surprise melons between the rows. I had four bushels of very delicious peas, and the Eclipse peas were ready to eat June 24th, and the peas all out of the way when the melons began to run. I had over 200 large melons, many weighing over five pounds, and one weighed nine pounds. The first one was ripe August 24th—3 weeks earlier than the Irondequoits that were planted the same day."

EDWARD C. WHITCOMB, Keene, N. H., Dec. 1st, 1921.

I have for the past twelve years bought practically all my seeds from you, and during that time I never had any seed to fail. Twelve years is a pretty good test. It is a fine thing to be sure of getting results if you attend to things properly."

HENRY R. JONES, Lake View, N. Y., March 21, 1921.

"I have used your seeds for several years with splendid results and have made several converts. Mr. and Mrs.—dare not plant any other garden and flower seeds but Harris'. Yet Mr.— runs a general store and sells quantities of garden seeds from other firms. Their garden is always the wonder and admiration of all."

ELMER E. COOK, South Otselic, N. Y.

"I wish to compliment you on your good seeds, for those purchased from you last year were far ahead of any heretofore used in my garden.

JOHN R. BACON, Danbury, Conn.

"We had splendid luck with your seeds. Our garden is not large, but every bit of it is used, and it is surprising the amount of vegetables we get from it—all we can possibly use for summer and for winter use also. The Scotia bean certainly is the very best, and John Baer is the only tomato for us."

MRS. D. L. BRADT, Gloversville, N. Y.

"I have this much to say of your seeds, they are the best I ever had. I grew 32 bushels of potatoes from the one bushel of Heavy Weight seed purchased from you. They out yielded Dibble's Russet under same conditions, four bushels. They are there in quality too."

R. A. WARREN, Oxford Depot, N. Y.

"Last year was my first one with your seeds, but I can truthfully report that they went beyond my expectations and were immensely satisfactory."

C. A. BARRY, Wellesly, Mass.

"We used seeds from three different houses last year and you surely had the right kind of goods—beat them all. You will get my business. I always boost a good thing.

HARRY A. ROSS, Worcester, N. Y.

"Your seeds have always been O. K. I tried your Wonderful lettuce last year. It was just as you recommended it, heads as large as cabbage and hard as a rock, 20 heads filling a barrel."

GEO. A. CHAMPLIN, Ashway, R. I.

"I sent you an order for seeds this year, and they were the best seeds that I got in a long time, and I got such good results from them that I want to place my order early so as to avoid the rush in the spring."

THOMAS H. JAGOL, Stratford, Conn.

"I was well pleased with all my garden seeds I bought of you this spring, especially the Quality Squash. They certainly are fine; beat anything we ever raised."

MRS. EZMA M. WIARD, Wattsburg, Pa.