

[Method of Preparing Seed Wheat to Prevent Smut] Arnold Shaw

Date: 1791/04/30

Contributors

Contributor Role

Author

Contributor Name

Arnold Shaw

Publication Format

Print

Type

Agriculture

Ingredients

wheat seed

water

salt

lime

Places

Newport

Hants County

Nova Scotia

Source: Weekly Chronicle

Institution: Nova Scotia Archives | **Source Origin:** Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm

Description

Letter dated 8 February 1791 describing how to prepare wheat seed with a salt "pickle" to prevent smut. Vol. 5, No. 25. Microfilm Reel 8165.

Transcription

Method of preparing Seed Wheat to prevent [Smut](#), in a Letter from Mr. Arnold Shaw of Newport, to the Secretary of the Agricultural Society for the County of

Hants, dated 8th February, 1791.

SIR,

IN compliance with the request of our society, I send you an account of the method I have for some time past pursued in preparing my wheat for seed; which is as follows---I take a bushel of my best wheat and pour it slowly into a wide vessel nearly filled with water,* then stir it and skim off whatever arises to the surface. The wheat being thus cleared of light grains and seeds of weeds, I pour off this water and put on fresh, leaving it to soak for twelve hours, unless in very warm weather, when ten hours will answer. After this I put the wheat into a pickle as strong as it can be made with salt dissolved in cold water; [t] in this situation I leave it twelve hours.--It is to be observed that in the above relation I am supposed to possess but one vessel, should I have more, more bushels of wheat would be under the operation at the same time. The wheat having stood in pickle for twelve hours as above, I then put it in baskets to drain for a few minutes, after this I spread it about three inches thick on a floor, sifting lime over and stirring it until each grain is coated over with lime; I then shovel it into a heap, in which situation I leave it for twenty four hours at least. It is now sufficiently prepared for sowing. Should any thing prevent its being sown for two days, I again spread and expose it to the air for about five minutes, heaping it immediately afterwards, as before; this I repeat every day until it is sown.

I have pursued this mode for eight years with the greatest success, previous to which my crops were as subject to [smut](#) as any of my neighbours. At the first time, not having any great faith in the method, from the bad success of those who had limed their seed but imperfectly, I prepared only half of my seed in this manner, the other half I sowed without any preparation; the result was that the limed seed produced a crop entirely free from [smut](#), the unprepared on the contrary, one, smutty to a great degree. The year following I intended to have limed all my seed, but at the close of my sowing (wanting some) I sowed a few ridges without previously preparing it, this produced some [smut](#), the other was entirely free from it.--Since this I have always prepared my seed in the abovementioned way, and to such effect, that there has not been the appearance of [smut](#) in any of my crops, although it prevails to a great degree in those of my neighbours.

I have the honor to be,
With my best wishes for the Society,
Your most obedient servant,
ARNOLD SHAW.

Annotations

smut

Defined by the OED as "A fungous disease affecting various plants, esp. cereals, which are spoiled by the grain being wholly or partly converted into a blackish powder."

Method of Preparing Seed Wheat to Prevent Smut recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes:

<https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/122>