

WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

How To Get Good Seed Corn

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THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO DO IT.

But no matter how it is done it pays to spend a little extra time and even money in selecting and curing seed corn. A bumper corn crop can only be produced from good seed.

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How To Get Good Seed Corn

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It pays to spend a little extra time and even money in selecting and curing seed corn. An increase of but one bushel per acre in the

Why Use Good Seed Corn. annual yield of corn throughout Wisconsin would mean a total increased yield of over one million bushels. A little attention paid to the selection and curing of seed corn will greatly increase the yield and produce a better and more profitable crop. By adopting improved methods of seed production many Wisconsin farmers have increased their yields several bushels per acre.

To get good seed:—

1. Allow the seed ears to mature well on the stalk. 2. Select the ears from promising stalks that are leafy, of medium size and which carry one good ear attached about three feet from ground. 3. Select only well formed ears with plump deep kernels and good tips and butts. 4. Avoid ears with long or short shanks or those attached to poorly formed stalks.

How To Get Good Seed. By selecting the earliest maturing ears and picking them as soon as the husks begin to turn yellow, which is a common practice, earliness is secured, but at the expense of vitality. A slight frost will not injure corn if it is well matured. In fact, it is far better to run the risk of a frost than to pick the ears too early. The latter part of the growing season greatly improves the vitality of the corn.

Go into the field after the husks on the ears have turned quite yellow and then select the well formed ears. It is well to follow the rows in selecting seed corn, otherwise a large number of good ears will

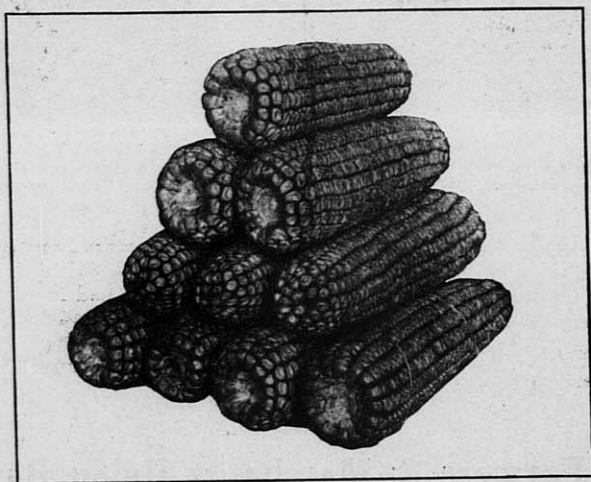


FIGURE 1. SOME OF NEXT YEAR'S PROMISES.

Uniformity and other desirable characteristics of this seed have been secured only by continued careful selection, curing and testing.

be missed. After the corn is husked, many ears will be found imperfect and these should be discarded. Those that are well formed and desirable for seed should be put into the proper place for curing upon the same day that they are taken from the field.

A few things to remember when curing seed corn: 1. Do not dry it in the direct rays of the sun. 2. Do not expose partially kiln dried corn to zero weather. 3. Allow free circulation of air the first few days while kiln drying. 4. After kiln drying place corn in a dry room free from rats and mice.

How To Cure Good Seed. When taken from the stalk, corn usually contains from 20 to 30 per cent of water. The most convenient way of ridding the corn of this excessive moisture is by the use of artificial heat, and the corn should be well dried out before it is stored away for the winter.

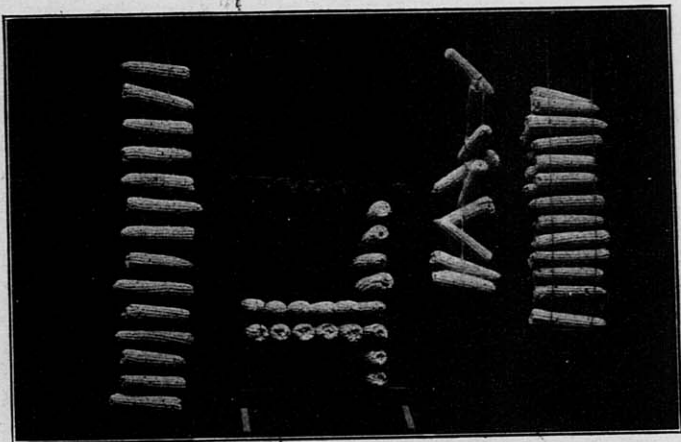


FIGURE 2. FOUR DEVICES FOR CURING SEED CORN.

At the left the double cord is shown. The rack in the center consists of a square frame of 2 x 4 inch strips on each side of which wires have been stapled two inches apart each way. The ears of corn are laid upon these two sets of wires. Next is shown the single cord method of tying and at the right hangs a rack made of heavy wire in which the ears are laid.

Corn should never be placed against the south side of a building in the strong sunlight, as the direct rays of the sun will soon injure the vitality of the seed. If corn is cured by hanging under a porch or under the roof of a corn crib, it should be stored away before hard freezing weather sets in, in a dry room where it will not take in moisture from the outside air. Germination tests show that corn kept in a dry room or attic or fire dried will generally give a test of from 98 to 100 per cent, but where left shocked in the field or on the standing stalk throughout the winter not infrequently every kernel fails to grow.

What Not To Do. During some exceptional years when the corn matures well, it will withstand freezing and retain its vitality on the stalks or in cribs fairly well, but in most years if the seed is not carefully cured its vitality will be materially reduced.

Where a kitchen or furnace room can be used for curing corn,

small hanging device may be used for the holding of the corn. A simple and practical method is to tie the ears so that they are a safe distance apart for drying as shown in Figure 2. Another device is to use double cord, placing ears between them so that they can be held securely and hung on a nail or hook by the loop.

Simple Methods of Curing Small Lots. Small movable racks shown in Figure 2 hold sufficient corn to plant five or six acres and can be placed in the kitchen until the corn is well dried. Another device is the "corn tree" shown in Figure 3. This device can be placed in a doorway or window where there is a strong current of air to carry off the moisture. Such a tree six feet high will hold enough corn to plant 15 acres.

Boards may be fastened together in panels 3'x6' and finishing nails driven in on both sides at the proper distance apart so that the ears of corn when placed on the nails will not touch. By having the panels fastened about two feet apart at top and bottom a large quantity of corn can be stored in a convenient way to let the air circulate freely through it.

A well ventilated attic which has a chimney passing through it and is located directly over a heated room so that it can be kept at a fairly uniform temperature through the winter is an exceedingly good place in which to cure corn.

Where to Cure and Store Seed Corn. The attic is often the driest room in the house and if in the early fall the corn is stored here on racks or hanging devices it will cure out exceptionally well. If a large quantity of corn is to be dried within the attic it will be necessary to set up a small stove to cure it in the best manner.

During the early fall corn may be cured very nicely underneath the roof of the corn crib. It should be hung where there is a good circulation of air through the crib. After corn has hung under the roof of the corn crib for four or five weeks it can be taken out and put into the attic or other dry room to be kept through the winter.

Curing Large Lots. For curing large quantities of corn, a special building for kiln drying should be erected. Plans for the same may be obtained free of charge from the Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wisconsin.

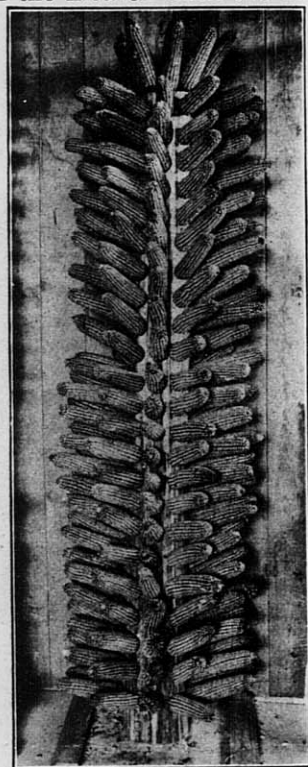


FIGURE 3. THE CORN TREE.

This device shown here will hold sufficient corn to plant 15 acres on the check row system. A smooth pole six feet long and eight inches in diameter is fitted with a base to hold it upright. Rows of long, headless finishing nails are driven into the post $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches apart. The ears of corn are thrust upon these nails and stand apart for curing.