

PENNING CHICKENS ON THE LAND

In the small home garden a modification of the summer fallow is one of the best and cheapest methods of combating nematodes. It consists of combining the fallowing with the penning of chickens. The fowls by their scratching and wallowing, will help to maintain the soil mulch; and their manure, incorporated into the soil, will not only prevent the soil's deterioration but will leave it much more fertile than before. The same precautions should be taken as with summer fallow; viz., keep down all vegetation and break up at once crusts that form on the soil after heavy rains. The writer has for several years employed this method of combating root-knot in his home garden. Penning the hens on the ground for six months during the summer has usually reduced the nematodes to such an extent that they did little damage to following crops. Penning for a year practically exterminated them.

This method is, of course, practicable for a small kitchen garden only, but it is exactly in such situations that root-knot does its most destructive work.

It is possible that penning hogs on the ground would result in much the same benefit, and could be practiced on a larger scale.

CONSTANT CULTIVATION OF RESISTANT CROPS

In an attempt to overcome the deleterious effects of summer fallow on soil fertility, another modification of the fallow method has been tried during the last two years. This is in effect a combination of the summer fallow and the growing of resistant crops. It was hoped that in this way the humus could be preserved by shading the ground with a cover crop which could be plowed under when planting time arrived. Even if the destruction of the nematodes is not as thoro as with the complete summer fallow, due to the partial interference of the crop with cultivation and the increased chances of weeds escaping destruction, the saving of soil fertility by this method might more than compensate the planter.

Brabham cowpeas and velvet beans were planted in rows and cultivated at least once a week; and, if it rained, more often. Absolutely every weed was destroyed by hoeing frequently. It will be noticed that this method differs from the old method of growing resistant crops in that the cultivation is more thoro and frequent, the crop never being "laid by."