

Florida—What She Offers to the Homeseeker and the Farmer

By A. J. Mitchell

Climatology in the abstract embraces those meteorological elements, temperature, rainfall and sunshine, which so largely affect the environment of man. The characteristics of nations are reflected by climatic influences and the products indigenous to any section are revealed to a considerable extent by its climate.

Up to a decade and one-half ago, the suggestion that Florida offered advantages as an agricultural state met with derision. Her pine forests were not associated with fertile soil and without which there could be no generous response to the efforts of the husbandman. Such was the ipse dixit of him who came south in a Pullman car, returning whence he came with the northward movement of the sun.

The exigencies of life frequently unfold hidden resources—dire extremity is often the forerunner of the "tidings of great joy." Florida's "discovery"—to be allegorical—probably dates from the disastrous cold waves of the 90's, when she was emancipated from the tyranny of the one-crop idea—that of citrus fruit. While not exactly a regeneration, the cold waves proved decidedly illuminating in two ways.

First: They forced diversion along agricultural lines in order to meet the immediate necessities of life, and, second, diversion showed the possibility of Florida's "white sand."

The rapid expansion of the fruit and vegetable industries, the contemplated development of the cane industry, together with other industries make it important that those interested should have a wider and more correct knowledge of the state.

I do not mean to imply that Florida is more exposed to the incursion of abnormal conditions than is California, a state that, in a large measure, produces similar products, but nature has been prodigal with good gifts and we should use ordinary precaution in conserving them, and in order to reap the rewards of industry, the grower should be sagacious enough to study the needs of the situation.

The crops grown in Florida from which the greatest revenue is realized, are subject to the vicissitudes of the weather, and they must be grown with the knowledge that adverse conditions may occur almost at any period during the winter months. This makes it incumbent on the grower to select his location with due regard for such emergency protective measures as may be necessary.

In this day of intensive methods the intelligent farmer brings to his aid every agency that makes for success. He studies the rainfall, seasonal and annual; the number of rainy days, and the frequency and extent of dry and wet spells; also the highest and lowest temperatures and the seasonal and monthly averages. This information is vital to the success of many crops grown in this state, and it may be had on application to any weather bureau office.

It is manifestly wrong not only ethically, but really injurious to the state, to assert that there is a "frost line" in Florida, for such is not the case. Under extreme conditions frost forms over the southern portion of the state, rarely of such severity, however, as to do serious damage. Florida's merits are sufficiently well established without resorting to misrepresentation which, in the long run, sows the seed of dissatisfaction.

In the study of climate with regard to crop production the progressive farmer should consider soil and temperatures. Adanson, the French botanist, states that the development of buds is determined by the sum of the daily mean temperature counted from the beginning of the year. Another authority concluded that the length of the period of vegetation is in inverse ratio to the mean temperature, while Sachs, possibly the greatest of plant physiologists, concluded that for each form of plant life there is a minimum, an optimum and a maximum temperature. It is obvious, then, that whenever the conditions are most uniform, by reason of equable temperatures and well distributed precipitation, a decided advantage results, for the possibility of crop failure is thereby reduced to a minimum.

Vegetable life attains its greatest perfection where the humidity is greatest and the temperature at which vegetable life becomes active is thought to be about 43 degrees. Not being subjected to prolonged and severe winters with great ranges in temperature, Florida soil is always in a receptive state, as it were, and crop growth is rarely retarded to such an extent as to excite apprehension. It is true that disasters have befallen our fruit industry at long intervals, but there is no orange zone in the United States that enjoys complete immunity from cold; and mark you, this applies to all physical divisions, whether in Florida or elsewhere.

The query: Is our climate changing? which comes ever and anon, especially after a series of frosts, carries but one answer—a negative one. A geological change in climate is established by the fossil remains of both the animal and vegetable kingdoms. That, however, does not establish a menacing progressive change, and average thermal conditions for a century show practically no departure from the established normal. Oscillations in climatic conditions do occur, but a permanent change, in a negative direction, would imply a loss of solar insulation, and the solution of that problem is wrapped up in the matter of the solar constant, which is receiving attention from many sources.

A matter of much importance to the homeseeker is the fact that the longevity of the human race is greatest in mild climates. For instance, recent statistics show that more people over one hundred years old are found in mild climates rather than in high latitudes. For instance, according to the last census of the German empire, there were only seventy-eight people who had passed the one hundredth year. In France, with a population of 40,000,000, there were 113 centenarians. In England there were 145, whereas in Spain more than four hundred souls were living who had passed the one hundredth year. Thus it will be seen that our latitude and proximity to the sea are factors of no small importance in the consideration of long life.—Florida Metropolis.

The really "big" man, the successful executive and administrator, parcels out the work to his assistants, gives them supremacy in their respective fields and backs them up. When they succeed he publicly gives them the credit for their work, literally advertising them and their capabilities. When he praises the deserving assistant he shows, perhaps unconsciously, but none the less effectively his own sagacity and ability and also his caliber.

VERO'S BOARD OF TRADE FIRST ACQUISITION IS BETTER PHONE SERVICE.

As a result of the activity of the Vero Board of Trade Vero is now getting better telephone service than it has had in the past. One of the first matters taken up by the Board of Trade after its organization was the telephone situation. General Manager Buck of the telephone company replied to a letter from the board that an exchange will be installed at Vero as soon as the business warrants it. In the meantime he agreed to make several changes in the system as suggested by the Board of Trade, so as to place all the Vero phones on one line. This makes it possible for all Vero subscribers to get connections with each other without going through the exchange at Ft. Pierce.

75-LB. PUMPKINS IN INDIAN RIVER FARMS.

If there was a county fair in St. Lucie county, Vero would stand an excellent show of carrying off the pumpkin prizes, as well as several others. The biggest pumpkin yet brought to town was grown by James Parker and weighed 75 pounds. Mr. Parker planted six hills of pumpkin seed on March 6 and by June 22 sixty-nine pumpkins had been taken from them. Of this number forty-nine ranged in size from 20 to 75 pounds. The family began eating baked pumpkins from the six vines when they were a month old. It isn't necessary to wait until "the frost is on the pumpkin" to have pumpkin pies in Vero. They can be grown at almost any time and will keep for months.

FIRST MELONS SELL WELL.

Encounter Warm Weather at Chicago and Bring High Prices.

The first cars of watermelons reached here from Florida early this week and sold at high prices, one car bringing \$600 and the other \$550. The melons were very fine and averaged at least 25 pounds. The cars arrived here just as the weather became very hot, and the melons sold quickly, jobbing mainly at 75 cents and \$1 a piece.

FLORIDA WEATHER.

Mark Twain once remarked that much was said about the weather, but very little has been done about it. In Florida it is not often that other than newcomers mention the weather. It is so uniform, so near perfect that excessive heat or chill is not constantly attracting attention or engendering thought on the subject. The states to the north of us are reported as suffering from intense heat—the hottest May in years, 'tis said. Here the cooling breezes are making life one long delight. Light blankets are necessary before morning and such sleep as we do get here, sound, unbroken, refreshing.—Florida Grower.

TURNING FROM COTTON.

By William A. McRae, Commissioner, Florida Department of Agriculture.

There is probably a greater diversification in the planting and growing of crops, principally grain, than has ever before been attempted in Florida. In all the former large cotton-growing counties there is a decided tendency toward the growing of grains and live stock, especially cattle and hogs, and it is quite likely that this will continue to increase every year.

The cost of growing cotton and the consequent reduction in quality of soil that attends the cultivation of cotton is turning many of the former cotton growers from that branch of agricultural industry toward the growing of live stock and grain. Undoubtedly, this is a very wise conclusion and will lead to a quicker upbuilding of the soils and general agricultural industries in this state than any other plan that can be adopted by the farmer of this state.

The agricultural conditions foreshadowed by the above statements and apparent at the present time are continuously improving and will, in all probability, continue to do so.—Manufacturers' Record.

The charter of the new tribe of Ben Hur at Vero has been closed with forty-five members. The organization is in a highly flourishing condition and new members are being taken in at nearly every meeting. The weekly dances being given by the lodge are proving a big success.

Fort Pierce, Fla., Jan. 30, 1914.

Mr. New Settler, Vero, Fla.

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