

From the three acre plots the seed is threshed by special machines, and goes out then on normal contracts, and there various accidents can happen. In any one district many varieties of peas are grown and where drills, headers, and threshing machines are shared it is almost impossible to avoid contamination. The export pea trade depends on purity, as does internal trade, and elaborate precautions are taken to eliminate all seed not true to type. Roguing is done by specially trained men who watch for any difference in leaf colour, time of flowering, shape of pod, etc. A few typical rogues in any crop may be pegged in the field and grown on so that their seed may be used as a guide in the final hand picking of the seed in the stores after dressing.

Mr. March patiently answered many questions. Dealing with cabbage he said that those sowed between Boxing Day and New Year's Day had seed ready to harvest in the following January, provided it was not spoiled by late spring frosts, as in Marlborough last year. Vernalization (i.e. pretreatment of seed at a low temperature) had not been successful with cabbage but gave striking results with red beet and was promising with lettuce. In growing various beets, hedges did help prevent cross pollination, but half a mile was considered the safe minimum distance between crops of different varieties. Producing parsnip seed raised a problem because the stem contains a poisonous principle and when the seed is ripe and the head is cut off the juice from the stem causes water blisters on the workers' skin. Seed production can be successful only where there is a dependable dry period during the time of ripening and harvesting. Marlborough and Hawkes Bay have suitable climates.

Mr. Dentice, also of Cooper's Seed Co., pointed out that before the war Mr. March had produced small quantities of all our common vegetables so that the company was ready to go straight into production when overseas supplies were cut off. Large quantities of vegetable seed were shipped to Australia to help feed American troops, and also to Great Britain. Owing to our limited internal markets, only certain lines can reasonably be continued with at competitive prices.

In moving a vote of thanks to Mr. March and Mr. Dentice, Mr. Poole pointed out that British traders now accept New Zealand peas instead of sending seed to be grown in North Africa and France. Similarly New Zealand certified grass seed has won approval overseas.

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XERONEMA - THE ISLAND LILY.

At the September meeting Dr. Oliver announced that his plant of Xeronema callistemon promises this year to produce ten flower heads probably out in late October or November. Members are invited to inspect the plant at Seatoun then.

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"TUATARA"

This little journal of the Biological Society of Victoria University College is a very welcome venture, which one hopes will meet with full support and success. The 29 pages of the first number are full of interest. An account of the activities in the biological sciences of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research will suggest possible vocations for students. Informative too are the articles on mosquito-borne diseases by M. Laird, on phytoplankton by D. A. Crawford, and on life at the Plymouth Marine Biological Station by E. J. Batham. Forerunner, we hope, of similar articles is the "Key to the littoral asteroids of New Zealand" by H. B. Fell, with useful illustrations. As editor W. H. Dawbin says "there is real scope for a journal which will provide articles on biological research in New Zealand readily accessible to the student and the general public." Here will be great fare for the modest annual subscription of 2/- for two numbers.

H. H. A.

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