

New Books . . .

Handbook for Vegetable Growers

By JAMES EDWARD KNOTT, Wiley, New York; Chapman & Hall, London. 1957, 238 pages. \$3.95. Reviewed by CLAUDE A. MAHONEY, CBS Farm News, Broadcast House, Washington 16, D. C.

JAMES EDWARD KNOTT, of the University of California at Davis, has performed a valuable service to agriculture—particularly market gardeners—in compiling his "Handbook for Vegetable Growers." Here in handy, compact, loose-leaf form, 5.5 by 7 in., is collected much of the information a vegetable grower needs: about plants themselves, their botanical families, their growth needs—that is, temperature and moisture requirements, germination habits, and seedbed and field requirements.

Next, Mr. Knott takes up soils and fertilizers. He has set up valuable tables of mulches and soil-improving crops—the tables showing the advantages of particular types of mulches and green manure crops to particular types of soil and areas. His treatment of fertilizers is comprehensive with considerable fundamental material, and will probably prove to be one of the most valuable sections of the "Handbook" for many users. It includes basic facts such as definitions of terms common to the trade plus information on composition of fertilizers and nutrient requirements of particular vegetable crops, and their requirements in relation to soil type.

The section on water will, of course, be of especial interest to growers in areas requiring irrigation, and considerable attention is given to the practice of supplying fertilizer to growing crops by means of sprinkler systems.

Mr. Knott's material on pest control is given in what must be almost frightening detail to a layman. It emphasizes once again the firm interlocking of chemistry with agriculture.

Other topics covered are harvesting crops and seed production.

One of the most useful features of the book is the frequent insertion of conversion tables—in a special section at the back and throughout the text wherever they have special application. Such tables answering what appears to be every conceivable question are certain to be of frequent help.

Much of the information in this book is in tabular form, and the tables are outstanding for their simplicity and directness. However, there is one serious objection to the "Hand-

book," and that is the size of type—so small almost as to require a magnifying glass. The reason is obvious: only by small printing is it possible to include this wealth of information in such a handily sized book. But it does pose a problem.

It perhaps should be emphasized that this handbook is not directed specifically to the growers of any one area, such as California, as might be assumed, since Mr. Knott comes from the University of California where so much work in agriculture is done for California growers. The book has been worked out on a general basis, with applicability to all areas. Hence, no varieties of vegetables for a given area are listed. But it is pointed out that such information is readily available from local experiment stations, and a list of those experiment stations is handily provided.

Finally, speedy use of the "Handbook" is assured by an excellent index.

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