Seeding Devices Encyclopedia Article

Seeding Devices

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Seeding Devices Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Seeding Devices.....3

Seeding Devices

Seeding devices such as the seed drill were important developments in agricultural history. Before seeding devices were developed, seeds were planted by hand or by scattering them over a field. Once seeding machines were invented, farmers could use less seed to yield higher crops in a shorter amount of time. As early as the third millennium b.c., Babylonians were presumably using seed drills along with ox-drawn plows. The seed drills depicted on Babylonian seals were simple vertical tubes through which seeds were dropped into newly opened furrows, thus making it easier to plow for irrigation and weed control. Seed drills like these were in use in India and China by 100 a.d., but they remained unknown in Europe until the 1700s when they were possibly introduced by Jesuit missionaries who had traveled in the Orient.

Once introduced to Europe, mechanical improvements were attempted, but seed drills were not practical until Jethro Tull, an English musician and "gentleman farmer," perfected a mechanical drill in 1701. Born in 1674 in Berkshire, England, Tull was educated at St. John's College, Oxford, to be a lawyer. He was called to the bar in 1699, but ill health prevented him from practicing or following a political career. Instead, he began experimental farming at Howberry, an estate near Wallingford, England, and later, in 1709, at Prosperous Farm near Hungerford, England. Tull's design used the grooved sound board of an organ, a brass cover and spring, and a toothed wheel. The machine sowed three rows at once and was pulled by one horse. Though described in his 1731 publication *Horse Hoeing Husbandry*, the drill did not become commonly used until the 1800s. In addition to the advantages of row planting, it has been theorized that the mechanical drill saved a great deal of seed. While early colonists rejected Tull's successful seed drill in favor of scattering, or broadcasting, seeds, later Americans were eager to use the new tool. Even so, as late as 1850, it is believed that fewer than twenty-five percent of the farmers in the northeast used modern methods and equipment such as the replaceable steel plows and seed drills. Today, multi-row grain seed drills are common tractor attachments.