

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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#### Fox as a Nursery pest.

In Athmuqam, the headquarter of the Divisional Forest Officer, Keran Forest Division, there is an old forest nursery used for raising deodar and other planting stock. It is situated at an altitude of 4500', is surrounded by high hills and there is heavy snow fall during winter.

Previously damage to seeds and plants by Porcupines, field rats and squirrels only was noticed in this nursery. This year edible walnut seed was dibbled in the 2nd week of January in lines about 6" deep and covered with earth. After few days of sowing there was about 1½" snow fall in the nursery area. When it was noticed that after removal of the thick layer of snow, nuts had been dug out from under 6" depth of soil, broken into pieces on spot and the edible portion eaten.

In spite of very cold weather and heavy snow all possible measures were taken to check the damage. Besides spreading poison bait (Potato and pumpkin mixed with zinc Sulphide) small traps were also used. Some poison bait was eaten but even then, instead of any check in damage, its intensity increased. Ultimately two men with 12 bore shot guns were deputed to shoot the animal. One of them was successful in killing a wild animal, which to every body's surprise turned out to be a fox. After killing of the fox, damage to nuts stopped completely. Before this incidence, no damage by fox to Walnut and other seeds sown in the nurseries in Keran Forest Division had come to notice.

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