

In front of my house I feed the pretty little red-billed gulls. They come to my whistle and tap on a plate. Frequently some one will come to photograph them. At one time I bought scraps from the butcher to feed them. Now I see them in front of his shop, as he now throws out scraps for them—the force of example. The boys are very good; even the dogs never interfere with the gulls now.

MAKE THIS AN ARBOR YEAR.

Arbor Day will come along in due course, about the middle of the year, but active nature-lovers should be busy with their planting long before the date which the Government proclaims.

Folk who like trees and shrubs—particularly “natives”—will take the first available opportunities to make additions to their beautiful plantations—if they have any space left—and to persuade friends to follow their example.

While the main consideration must be an Arbor Year, it is important to have a worthy celebration of Arbor Day, one which will make a permanent impression for good on the minds of the rising generation. For this purpose tree-lovers should form efficient committees in all districts. Now is the time to begin preparations for the best Arbor Day of New Zealand's history.

The utmost care should be taken to have a proper planting of only such a number of trees as can be assured of a good prospect of strong survival—especially in the early stages of their growth, lest Arbor Day may be converted into a tree-murder day.

STARLINGS' DEMONSTRATION AGAINST CATS.

Early one Sunday morning a commotion in the bird world awoke me (writes Miss R. Zeller). Whenever this takes place I get up to investigate, as it is always something unusual that causes such a noise before it is fully light. Usually it is a cat on the guttering looking for baby-birds in the corner of a roof.

The starlings do their best to drive away the marauder, even when it is a sparrows' nest and not their own which is in danger. Several times I have had to lend a hand by sending some soft clods of earth aimed none too skilfully on a neighbour's roof, hoping I would not bring out angry people rubbing their eyes to see what was the matter, and thus have birds and me all into trouble.

When the cat is successfully routed the starlings stand guard for quite a time, while the poor parent sparrows find courage to re-enter their home and count their “babies.” If the cat so much as dares to show his nose round a corner, the starlings once more set up the loudest possible din.