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## Possibilities of Fruit Growing in Alberta

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IN DEALING with the subject, "Fruit Growing in Alberta," one must of necessity deal more in the somewhat speculative possibilities of development in the future, rather than the accomplished facts of the past and present. In being, in a measure, speculative and optimistic as to Alberta's future success in growing cultivated fruits of many kinds, one is heartily in accord with the general spirit of the west as applied to almost every line of her effort. The west reveals her speculative tendencies in regard to lots and lands and everywhere you go, the optimistic man is met, who is full of buoyant hope and lives in the future and its possibilities.

Alberta earnestly desires to be classed among those happy provinces where the clover blossom sheds its practical perfume, and where apples delight the eye and appetite. One is justified in indulging the hope that her desire will be realized when we consider that few countries or provinces can show a wider range of wild fruits of good quality than are produced here. The prairie in May is covered with the bloom, and later in due time with the fruit of the wild strawberry. This fruit is abundant and of good size—such a size, in fact, that settlers frequently gather plants from the prairie and give them garden cultivation with success.

Cultivated varieties of the strawberry have been tried here and there. These attempts have been generally successful, a gentleman of Red Deer claiming, under the single hedge row system, one quart to each plant. Another grower at Leduc produced a very fine patch last year, which gave good promise in May last. The results in fruit I have not learned. The size and quality of the fruit is all that could be desired. While we have no results from our work on the Experimental Farm to publish as yet, I am confident that good money can be made growing strawberries in Alberta with as little risk as elsewhere. Bloom can be held back slightly until danger of late frosts is largely past. Wind breaks can be provided so that the runners will root and not be blown about by the wind.

Following the strawberries, growing in the wild freedom of the prairie, are

gooseberries, currants and raspberries. These not only grow well according to nature's plan, yielding in quantities sufficient to tempt the Indian lasses to increase their worldly wealth by picking and peddling, but where cultivated varieties have been tried, success has attended every effort as far as I know. Red currants in particular do well.

All varieties of red, white and black currants planted on this farm have done well, though, since started in the spring of 1907, they have not reached heavy bearing age. Small quantities of fruit have been produced this year and the size and quantity is such that I feel war-

### A Credit

I have received THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST from the first number of its existence, in 1878, to the last number issued, being over 30 years without intermission. I always keep the copies of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST and have bound a large number of the volumes. They are a credit to any book-shelf.—Daniel B. Hoover, Almira, Ont.

ranted in saying that these fruits should be planted in every farmer's garden, and that they can be counted on to give a good account of themselves.

In regard to the larger fruits, little definite can be said as a result of our work, except to say that we are trying cherries, plums and apples, and expect to succeed with some varieties of these fruits. We lost only about eight or ten per cent. of our trees during last winter, and we have trees that wintered through 1906-7, at Red Deer, and are vigorous. We have about 600 apple trees made up of some 150 varieties, and we hope to be in a position shortly to speak more definitely in regard to the varieties that will succeed. I have faith in the Duchess, Yellow Transparent and varieties of this class, while many of the Russian cross-bred apples are almost sure to succeed. I am informed on good authority that apples have been ripened at Medicine Hat, Magrath, Red Deer and Edmonton.

Our chief danger in winter is from the sudden spells of warm weather followed by equally sudden cold waves. In this vicinity and northward we are not as much exposed to this danger as farther south. Again, a danger to which we are exposed in lesser degree than farther south is the high winds. As time passes, protection from heavy loss may be secured through wind breaks of quick growing trees, such as cottonwood, Manitoba maples and so forth.

To sum up, I believe a success can be made of growing cultivated fruits of many kinds: (1) Because nature produces on the prairie in lavish abundance many kinds of these same fruits. (2) Because successes with strawberries, currants, gooseberries and apples are beginning to be recorded. (3) Because many of the failures, in apples particularly, may be traced to injudicious selection of varieties; (instances have been known where Northern Spys and Gravensteins have been planted.) (4) Because the climate is no more severe (minimum temperature last winter being twenty-one degrees) nor changeable than many parts of Ontario where apples are now regarded as a safe crop.

Thus the men who succeed in producing fruit in commercial quantities, will have a market at their door where strawberries and other small fruits seldom sell below fifteen cents a box (holding two layers of strawberries thinly spread), and where apples retail at \$2.75 a bushel box, to \$7.00 a barrel for "seconds." When one considers the enormous country to be supplied with fruit and the demand there will be for home grown fruit, trees and nursery stock, the prospect certainly looks good for the careful nursery man and fruit grower of Alberta.

Great as are the opportunities along many lines in this new country, one should not be accused of undue optimism or be charged with being carried away by the speculative spirit of the west, when he declares it is his belief that fruit-growing presents possibilities equal to any line of effort in pleasure and in profit—profit to the citizen who so succeeds, as well as to his nation.