

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (HORTICULTURAL BRANCH).

THINNING TREE-FRUITS.

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THE very favourable weather which has occurred throughout the blooming season in all the fruit districts of the Province has favoured the setting of a very large percentage of the blossoms. There are very few trees which will not have all the fruit they can carry, and probably the majority of them will have more than they can carry with profit. This brings up the question of the thinning of fruit, a practice well recognized in the States to the south of us, but not yet generally understood throughout British Columbia. A discussion of the methods and results of thinning is at the present time very much in order, because the work must be undertaken in the very near future.

HOW MUCH FRUIT SHOULD A TREE BEAR?

In discussing the question of thinning, we admit that a tree may set more fruit than it can possibly bring to perfection, as the fruit-grower understands perfection. Nature cares nothing for the fruit except as an aid to produce seed; the orchardist cares nothing for seeds except as they are necessary to the production of fruit. We wish each tree to carry all the fruit it can bring to commercial perfection, and no more.

At the same time, the tree must make new vegetative growth consistent with its age and the variety.

The third requisite is that it should also form enough fruit-spurs for a similar crop in the following year. This ideal is the foundation of our orchard practice.

When a tree is fulfilling these three requirements it is performing its maximum duty to the owner. If it falls short in any one of them, he is not getting his maximum of profit, either immediate or prospective, from it.

HOW DOES THINNING HELP?

The removal of some of the fruit at an early stage in its growth helps materially towards securing the maximum duty of the tree in certain definite ways:—