

OUR QUESTION AND ANSWER DEPARTMENT

Readers of The Horticulturist are invited to submit Questions on any phase of Horticultural work

What is a Fruit?

Is the tomato a fruit? The September HORTICULTURIST infers that it is. I classify it as a vegetable. Please define the word "fruit."—B.E.M., Wolfville, N.S.

From a strictly horticultural standpoint, the word "fruit" cannot be defined. Botanically, a fruit is the ripened ovary with such organs as may adhere to it. A well-known authority states that a fruit, in the popular sense, is the fleshy and juicy product of some plant, usually tree or shrub (and nearly always containing the seed) which, when ripe, is *edible without cooking*, and adapted for use as a dessert rather than as a salad. This would include the tomato and exclude the quince and the cranberry. Perhaps some of our readers will venture to coin a perfect definition. Let us hear from you.

The Niagara Peach

Is the Niagara Peach a good variety to plant for commercial purposes?—A.M., Vineland, Ont.

The Niagara Peach has not been tested to any extent in Ontario. In New York State some of the best growers claim that it is a good one. It comes in about the same season as Elberta and is equal to it in size, color and thickness of skin. In flavor it is on a par with Crawford. The Niagara peach should be tried in all our peach districts.

Cherry Scion on Plum

Will cherry graft on a plum tree be satisfactory as a bearer of fruit?—Subscriber, Clinton.

It would be difficult to make the cherry scion grow on plum stock. The density of the two woods and the habits of growth are so different that even if it grew it would never be a complete success unless as a curiosity.—Answered by L. Woolverton, Grimsby, Ont.

Sterile Strawberries

I have a patch of Irene strawberries. They bloomed well but did not set fruit. What is the reason?—W. B. A., Lindsay, Ont.

Strawberry blossoms are of two kinds, perfect and imperfect. Irene belongs to the latter. Dig up and plant every third row with some perfect flowering variety like Williams, or, plant a new patch similarly planned.

The Garden Huckleberry

Is the garden huckleberry of value either as a domestic or commercial fruit?—J. S., Prescott, Ont.

This fruit is not a huckleberry. It is closely related to the deadly nightshade,

which has until recently been considered poisonous. The garden huckleberry is not poisonous, however, like some other plants of the same genus, *Solanum*, notably the tomato and the potato. It is easily grown, productive, and quite hardy. The berries are not edible without cooking. In seasons when fruits for preserving are scarce, the garden huckleberry will be appreciated in the home garden. It is not likely to be of commercial importance.

Apples for New Ontario

Is it possible to grow apples in New Ontario? What are the best varieties? Is spring or fall the best time to plant black currants?—J. M., North Bay, Ont.

Apples can be grown in that district but not with commercial satisfaction. Only the hardiest varieties will withstand the severity of the winters, and most of them are not the leading commercial sorts. Among those that have done fairly well are Yellow Transparent, Charlamoff, Duchess, Wealthy, Hibernial, Longfield, Patten and Scott's Winter. The Whitney and Hyslop crabs also can be grown with success. Currants start into growth so early in spring that it is best to plant in fall. They are hardy, and may be planted at either season.

Growing Muskmelons

What should be done to prepare gravelly soil for a few hills of muskmelons in a private garden? Is Paul Rose a good red-fleshed variety for the purpose?—M. J. T., Niagara Falls South, Ont.

Manure with well-rotted compost this fall. Plow or dig late as possible before freezing, and repeat the work in spring. There is no better salmon or red-fleshed melon than Paul Rose for quality.—Answered by W. A. Emery, Aldershot, Ont.

The English Ivy

Is the English Ivy grown as a decorative plant in America?—L.A., St. John, N.B.

The English Ivy is cultivated in some parts of America, even in the north, when protected in winter, but its part in the rôle of decorating is a small one. Such vivid contrasts of color in foliage and such a wealth of Christmas associations is possessed by no plant as the ivy, "To which the ghost of all the storied past alone tells its tale of departed greatness; the confidant of old ruined castles and abbeys; the bosom companion of solitude itself. True to

these instincts, the ivy does not seem to be naturalized so easily in America as most other vines. We are yet too young—this country of a great future and a little past." For covering walls in greenhouses, for screens in drawing-rooms and for hanging baskets, it is a valuable plant. The ivy that is most used in America for decorating is a shrub of the Southern States.

The Rosemary

In literature dealing with old-fashioned Christmas customs, we often read of the rosemary. What is it?—E.L.B., Stratford, Ont.

The rosemary of old England, so largely used at one time in the appointment of the Christmas feast, grows wild in some parts of that country, but is native more particularly to the Mediterranean region, especially the chalk hills of Southern France. With it are connected many superstitions, as: "The rosemary, which was anciently thought to strengthen the memory, was not only carried at funerals, but also worn at weddings." It is a hardy evergreen shrub with aromatic leaves, which are sometimes used for seasoning. The wild rosemary of Canada, a species of Labrador tea, and the sand-hill rosemary of the south, are quite distant from the true rosemary.

Laurel or Sweet Bay

Last Christmas I bought some branches said to be laurel, but do not think they were true to name. Is there more than one kind?—E.W., Galt, Ont.

Under the name laurel are commonly included many broad-leaved evergreens, but the true laurel, or sweet bay tree, of the florists* is *Laurus nobilis*. Laurel leaves are used in some countries for cookery and making confections, because of their aromatic flavor. For purposes of adornment, it has had, and still has, a prominent place. In America the kalmias are known as laurels, and their glossy leaves are much sought for at Christmas. Most of our laurel comes from Maryland and Virginia, but it also is found in the eastern provinces of Canada.

Camellia Not a House Plant

Is the camellia a good plant for growing in the house?—R. P., Sarnia, Ont.

The camellia is a plant that requires plenty of pure air and a moderate temperature; therefore, it is not recommended as a house plant.—Answered by Thos. Manton, Eglinton, Ont.