

PRUNING THE GRAPE.

SIR,—Please tell me how to prune grape vines, and when should it be done?

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HERE is no better time than the mild days of December for pruning the grape, providing the wood is not cut back too close to the new buds. It may also be done in early spring, but if deferred too long there is loss of strength by profuse bleeding. There are many systems of pruning the grape, each of which has ardent advocates. At Maplehurst we practice the Fuller system, which we may briefly describe as follows:—The first year after planting allow only one stem to grow (Fig. 709), and at the end of the first year, cut this back to within about one foot from the ground. The second year allow two buds to grow, producing two branches as in Fig. 710.

At the end of the second year, bend down these two branches to form two arms, and these should be trained each way four or five feet along the lower

wire, forming what are known as the "two arms." From these uprights are grown about every foot apart, as in Fig. 711, and every year these are cut back to within one or two buds of the old wood of these two arms.

It is a great temptation to do longer pruning, or to have many of the uprights uncut; but the result seems always to be disastrous, for the growth will go to these higher parts to the almost entire abortion of the buds below. Then when it becomes very desirable to cut back, there are no buds left on the main arms to renew the growth for the season following.

In addition to this, the only pruning needed in the summer, is simply to rub off superfluous sprouts when they are just beginning to push, and to stop the young growth about a leaf or two beyond the last bunch of grapes.

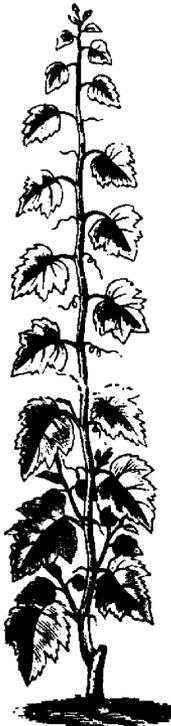


FIG. 709.

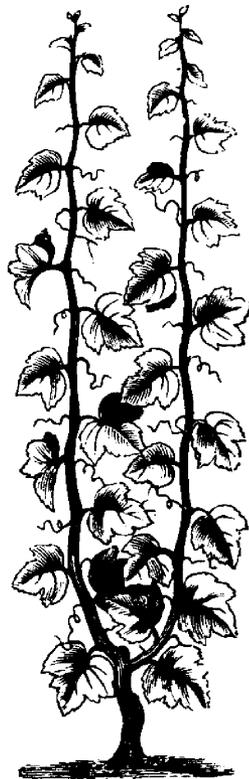


FIG. 710.