

GROWING AND HANDLING APPLES FOR PROFIT*

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APPLES are grown in nearly every kind of soil and location provided by nature in the Bay of Quinte district, and to a certain extent are giving fair returns for the investment. The successful orchards are those that are in more favored locations, somewhat rolling land, protected from the west and southwest winds, which cause great destruction to fruit before it is ready to pull and cause the young trees to lean to the northeast, leaving the trunks subject to sun scald and of an unsightly appearance.

The ideal soil for an apple orchard is sandy loam, with clay subsoil, well drained naturally or with under drains. This class of land has many advantages compared with heavier land. It is much easier to keep in thorough cultivation, retains moisture better in a dry season, gives quicker returns from fertilizers, although it does not retain them probably as long. Cover crops take much easier, fallen fruit is not so much damaged, and is in a much better condition for the canning factory or evaporation and is very often shipped to market. There are not many varieties which do not do exceedingly well on this class of soil. Cranberry and Blenheim Pippins do better on heavy soil, while Hubbardson Nonsuch does best on limestone gravel.

SELECTION OF TREES.

A tree of medium size, two or three years old, from a graft or bud is best, as trees that are older are slower in starting and do not make as good growth. I prefer a good one year old to a four or five year old. In four years the one year old tree will be the larger and come into bearing first.

Up to 15 years ago the orchards were all planted 20 to 30 feet apart and of late years 40 feet apart, which might seem to be a lot of vacant space. For 15 years at least I would prefer 25 or 35 feet apart, and when

the trees begin to crowd, remove every alternate tree, and if the orchard has been properly cared for they will by that time have paid a profit for the care and land occupied by them. The remaining trees will show a marked benefit both in appearance and in the quantity, size, color and quality of the fruit.

FORMING THE HEAD AND PRUNING.

When the trees are set they should not be so that the head will be formed 30 or 36 inches from the ground. If trees are dried out and not in a healthy condition, I would leave three or four terminal buds, as they are much easier to start into growth than the other buds.

If all the branches are cut away close to the trunk adventitious buds would have to be depended on for forming the head, and as these might stand out anywhere along the trunk the top would not be as symmetrical as when four stubs were left. During the first season the tree will require little if any pruning, although if a tree is forming a poorly shaped head a little judicious pruning will often be helpful in making a uniform school. In early spring the trees should be looked over and whatever branches are not required in forming a good head should be removed, care being taken not to remove too much. The less pruning done the sooner the trees will come into bearing, and if the trees are quite thick when they come into bearing fruit the weight of the fruit will make them nearly thin enough.

Many growers seem to think they are not pruning unless they remove everything from the centre of the tree so that there will be no fruit except at the outer ends of the branches. Sometimes it is 10 feet from the trunk to the first fruit spurs, causing the tree to split in pieces although there are only a few bushels of fruit on it. I prefer

* Extract from an address delivered at the recent convention of the Pomological and Fruit Growing Society of the Province of Quebec.