

prevent its attacks more easily in advance than we can subdue its injuries after their access to the plants.

This *Naltica* is a very timid insect, and when disturbed can be seen jumping in every direction from its danger. Through this feature of its habits it may be possible to drive it from the scene of its operations, where its abundance is absolutely destructive to crop, and then to protect the plants now freed from its presence by surrounding the bed with boards. As many of the plants subject to its attacks are grown in beds which supply plants for transplanting, this remedy seems often to be a feasible one.

The presence of the radish fly, *Anthomya radicum*, prevents us from growing perfect radishes in our heavy soil. So far as our observations determine, none of the applications noted above is of avail against this pest. We noted, however, that in a bed of radishes of which the soil had received a very liberal mulching of coal ashes last season the roots were almost entirely free from the maggot.

We found also that bi-sulphide of carbon applied to the soil, destroyed the maggots that had not yet penetrated the roots, but the use of this remedy is accompanied by so many disadvantages that we must consider it in general as impracticable. [Dr. Sturtevant does not seem to have tried Superphosphate, which is found by our horticulturists to be an effective remedy for the *Naltica*.]

THE HAMPSHIRE STRAWBERRY FIELDS.

The Strawberry harvest is now at its height, and the atmosphere is redolent with the perfume of this luscious fruit. From within a few miles of Botley Station over 1000 tons of Strawberries are annually gathered for the metropolitan markets, to say nothing of what are sold in the locality. The crop this year is not so heavy as that of last season, owing to the protracted drought having seriously affected the highest and shallowest soils. One thing has been particularly noticeable this year, and that is the way in which the plants in some beds have continued to thrive and look luxuriant even during the most trying periods of the drought, while plants in other beds side by side and on exactly the same kind of soil have drooped and languished, and their produce has been small and flavourless. On enquiry, I have invariably found that the luxuriant-looking beds are the result of deep cultivation, the effect this year being much more pronounced than in more genial seasons, when the plants find moisture near the surface. The soil is naturally light in character, but of considerable depth, and I find that

those growers who thoroughly break it up by trenching from 2 feet to 3 feet are well repaid this year for their labour, while those who planted on soil dug over in the ordinary manner are spit deep have but very light crops. The reason is obvious; in the trenched ground the roots strike down deeply, and find moisture during even the driest periods, but on simply dug ground, after reaching the hard unbroken subsoil, they strike out horizontally, and during protracted droughts fail just when the rain of swelling the crop is most trying to the plants.

It is curious to note how the soil varies even in the same field, some parts being black peat, others yellowish loam, and close by light shingly soil full of stones. But if deeply broked up, Strawberries luxuriate in all of them, the subsoil just suiting them. I find, too, that owing to this variable character of the soil the season of gathering, brief at the best, is extended; from the highest and most stony land the earliest fruit is gathered, as the sun's rays warm this kind of soil much more rapidly than the stiffer loams; on the other hand, the stiffer kind of soil produce the finest crops and the longest in bearing. But when the disparity in the price of the fruit is considered, it is not to be wondered at that growers are anxious to get it into market as early as possible.

The first consignments of 1 lb. punnets usually realise from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per punnet, but the price rapidly drops down to 6d. each, and, as the supply becomes general, to 3d., and when the market gets glutted to 2d. per lb., a losing price, after paying for punnets and expenses attending carriage and marketing, to say nothing in regard to cultivation—a heavy item. The remedy for this glutting of the markets with such a perishable fruit as the Strawberry is obvious, viz., to convert the fruit into jam, for which the demand is unlimited. A company is even now in course of formation to procure the necessary capital and appliances, therefore, as soon as market prices fail to pay, the growers will have a ready outlet for the rest of their crop on the spot. Now, after the best fruits have been picked, great quantities of small fruit, really the best for the purpose of preserving, are allowed to rot on the ground. As a preliminary step until the works can be established, it is proposed to convert the fruit into pulp by a process that ensures its being kept in good condition until it can be finally converted into jam.

Should jam making prove to be a successful undertaking, a great impetus will be given to the cultivation of Strawberries in South Hampshire. Small-fruited varieties like the Grove End Scarlet will doubtless be planted by acres solely for preserving, while at present only varieties

that travel well by rail, such as Sir Joseph Paxton and President, are favourites. We cannot hope to compete with Kent and other fruit-growing counties successfully in Apple, Cherry, or Plum culture, but we can take the next best course, and grow what we find the soil and situation eminently adapted for; viz., the Strawberry. That grown solely as a dessert fruit already affords employment for hundreds of hands, and occupies hundreds of acres, and with the means of converting the surplus fruit into a useful article of food, for which we are still sending vast sums of money abroad, we shall not only benefit the locality, but be doing national work. Home-grown fruits for preserving, in spite of adverse seasons, are making rapid advances, and I anticipate a great future for this industry.

James Groom, Gosport; in *The Garden*.

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