

PLUM POCKETS—(TAPHRINA PRUNI.)

THIS disease is due to the presence of a parasitic fungus which attacks the young fruit, and by its growth within their tissues causes the peculiar development of the latter which finally results in the formation of the so-called "pocket."

The "pockets" (fig. 77) make their appearance soon after the flowers have fallen, attain their full size and drop from the tree towards the middle or last of June. At first they are more or less globular in shape, but as they grow older they become oblong or oval and frequently more or less curved. They vary in size, but as a rule are from 1 to 2 inches in length and from one-half to one inch in diameter. When young they are nearly smooth and can be distinguished from the healthy fruit by their pale yellow or reddish color. As they grow older the color changes to grey, the surface appearing as though it had been sprinkled with fine powder, and at the same time

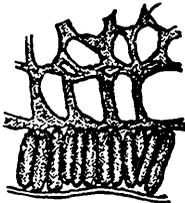


Fig. 77.

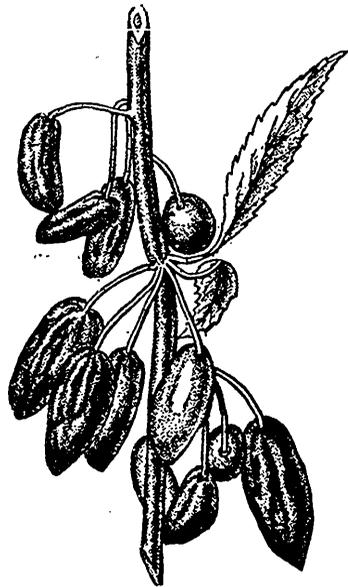
the "pockets" become wrinkled. Finally they turn black or dark brown, and rattle like bladders when brought in contact with any hard substance. Sections through the diseased fruit show that the walls are quite thick, and that in place of a stone there is a large cavity filled with fungous threads and air.

The fungus attacks the young branches and leaves, and when this occurs the injury is, of course, much greater than when the fruit alone is attacked.

The disease never sweeps over the country attacking all varieties of the plum alike, but, on the contrary, it often happens that a particular tree will bear nothing but "pockets," while adjacent trees of the same

variety, grown under precisely the same conditions, show no traces of the disease whatever. As a rule, a tree that has once borne a crop of "pockets" seldom recovers, but continues with each succeeding year to produce a greater or less number of the malformations.

All plums are more or less subject to the attacks of this parasite, but it is usually more abundant on the red and purple varieties. It occurs also



"PLUM POCKETS." FIG. 78.

on the wild red and the beach plums, and on the dwarf, the wild black and the choke cherries.

A microscopic examination of one of the diseased plums will show that the fungus occurring within the tissues consists of three parts, namely, (1) mycelium; (2) asci; (3) spores or reproductive bodies. The mycelium consists of colorless septate filaments. These are particularly abundant