

Ontario Department of Agriculture

FRUIT BRANCH

Plum Culture in Ontario

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Of the important tree fruits plums and pears have received least attention at fruit meetings, and in the agricultural press during the last few years. Apples are worth a great deal more money to the Province, and as a consequence are more generally popular, and take the leading place in the discussions. Peaches, though adapted commercially to limited areas in the Province, have through the energy and organization of the growers been boosted excessively in tender fruit sections. Even in cherries, of late, a few are quoting the large profits that have been made and are to be made from them, and the plantings are rapidly increasing. 1914 crop and low prices will, however, check this advance for a time. Pears have begun to grow in popularity because of the more gradual upward trend of prices and the more successful control of blight, but plums at date of writing are not holding their own in the Province, and except for a few growers who are making a success of them the interest is dead. Prices are from medium to low, few trees are being planted, their care is incidental, or secondary, and they are almost everywhere considered a side line, not a specialty. The purposes of this Bulletin, therefore, are:

1. To sum up the status of the industry as a whole.
2. To study causes of the lack of interest.
3. To study the cultural methods of the most successful growers.
4. To describe a few varieties that are important commercially.
5. And to offer suggestions for future development.

(1) PRESENT STATUS OF THE INDUSTRY.

The census returns for 1911 show a decrease in the number of trees in the Province. In 1901 Ontario was credited with 1,685,719 trees. Of this number 99,091 were bearing and 686,628 were non-bearing. In 1911, the last year for which the census figures are available, Ontario was credited with 1,124,022 trees, 67,827 of which were bearing and 356,195 were non-bearing. The number of bearing trees had decreased by 330,433, or 48.1 per cent., while the total decrease was 561,697 trees, or 33.3 per cent. The greatest decrease is in the non-bearing