

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE GOOSEBERRY.

The Gooseberry is a fruit which seems rather at a disadvantage in Ontario, as the standard English sorts do not succeed, both from their liability to mildew and because their mode of growth is unsuited to the climate.

Only two kinds are considered reliable—the Downing and the Houghton, and these in quality, growth and size of fruit are but middling. From their appearance I should suppose these to be hybrids, and that the small, smooth, swamp berry is the female parent.

If this be correct, it is quite possible and probable that we may yet have a considerable number of new sorts, and of a much better quality; but the matter must be taken up without loss of time, or it may be too late.

It has often been said that this was a land of wild grapes, but when first settled it was even more a country of wild gooseberries, and the varieties were endless; red, green, rusty-purple, and even blue; small, middling and large, prickly, spiny, hairy and smooth.

Some of the two last are, or were, of very fine flavour, almost equalling the finest English kind, which is also hairy.

In many old settled and improved districts the native gooseberry is practically extinct, and ere the march of civilization completely annihilates it, we need men of observation, practical and scientific knowledge, who have taste and leisure, to experiment and improve this fruit. Seedlings with the native habit of growth, and the fruit more like the English in size, would make a name and a profit for the successful originator. But even if good hybrids cannot be produced, we need not confine ourselves to two sorts, nor to twenty.

When this district was new, I was struck with the superior habit of growth and the efficient mode of renewal of the native bushes in the woods.

On trying the fruit I found the quality not only bad and indifferent, but also good, and used to mark plants of superior flavour when ripe that I might transplant in the fall.

In this way I selected and removed three or four dozen bushes, which filled a considerable plot of ground when placed at a due distance from each other, intending to prune, mulch and manure them, but owing to various untoward circumstances they were quite neglected.

Notwithstanding want of care they have borne for more than twenty-five years, and for pies, preserves and ripe use, we think them better, and certainly more reliable, than the two standard sorts.

Several years ago I saved and sowed seed from the best and largest, but did not find the fruit of the seedlings equal to the parents. Cultivation will not improve them.

They differ from the English sorts in having a disinclination to take root from cuttings, but any sucker or offshoot with the least portion of root will grow.

Partial shade is desirable, as in some kinds the fruit drops considerably in arid situations.

C. ORILLIA.

REPORT OF FRUIT TREES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST.

DEAR SIR,—I am a little late with my report for 1881. The winter of 1880 and '81 was a very hard one here. My Ontario apple tree was winter killed dead to the snow line. I had a graft of the same variety, which was grafted into a seedling stalk; it was also killed.