THE CULTIVATION OF STRAWBERRIES.

GARDEN and Forest condenses a late bulletin of the Ohio Experimental Station, on this subject, as follows: Most varieties of strawberries fruit more abundantly the second season than the first, and the berries are correspondingly smaller. For home use it is not a matter of importance as to the length of time a bed is kept, but for market there is seldom any profit in keeping a bed of any of the prolific medium-sized sorts more than one season. It usually costs less to plant a new bed than to clean out an old one, and it is much easier to keep a new bed clean. The earliest berries come from old beds, but they are smaller, and the fact that they are nurseries for insects and diseases condemns them. In treating an old bed, many practical growers mop the tops off the plants and burn over the bed when they are dry. This is the best possible way of checking rust. Straw and leaves used as mulch should be raked into the centre of the rows before burning when there is danger of injuring the plants by too great heat. After burning, the ground between the rows should be kept thoroughly worked.

Winter protection should be given, not to keep the plants from freezing, but to prevent them from heaving and to retain moisture in summer and to keep the berries clean. Early winter is the best time to apply it. Straw is objectionable because of grain and weed seeds, which it contains. The best material is marsh hay, which is free from foul seed and is not easily blown off. It is not advisable to remove this mulch in spring either to avoid early frost or to cultivate, unless the bed is very weedy.

The proper proportion of perfect and pistillate flowered sorts to plant is an open question. Varieties and seasons have, perhaps, much to do with the matter, and no definite rules can as yet be given. One of the pollen-bearing sorts in every five plants is usually sufficient, and it is well to mate the two classes as to time of blooming, color, size and firmness of fruit as nearly as possible. The most prolific sorts are found among those which have imperfect flowers, although many of this class are not prolific. The best of the imperfect-flowered varieties are better than the best perfect-flowered varieties as to prolificacy, as to freedom from disease and general reliability. Many perfect-flowered kinds bloom as freely and set as many berries as any of the other class, but they are more apt to succumb to drought and unfavorable influences—that is, they are not so likely to carry a crop through to perfection as those that bear no pollen. This fact is so well understood that the general custom is to plant as few as possible of the perfect-flowered kinds, and the numerous inquiries after reliable varieties of this class show that something better than we now have is wanting.