

OUR QUESTION AND ANSWER DEPARTMENT

Readers of The Horticulturist are invited to submit Questions on any phase of Horticultural work

Harvesting Kieffer Pears

At what stage of maturity should Kieffer pears be picked, and in what manner should they be handled to ensure the best quality, and at the same time to retain their value as keepers?—H.A.R., Ivan, Ont.

For export we usually pick Kieffer pears the first and second weeks of October. For home or domestic purposes we allow them to remain on the trees a little longer in order to reach a more advanced stage of maturity. After they are picked their maturity may be accelerated or delayed according as they are kept in a dry warm, or a dry cool place. For canning or preserving, they should be thoroughly matured and cooked a little longer than other pears. They are then hard to excel in sprightly excellent flavor.—Answered by A. W. Peart, Burlington.

Vine Peach

I am sending to THE HORTICULTURIST a specimen of a vine fruit that is a novelty. Identify and mention value.—C.H.C., Fruitland, Ont.

The fruit submitted is known specifically as *Cucumis melo chito*. It has various common names, such as vine peach, garden lemon, orange melon and vegetable orange. Although scarcely edible in its natural state, it is useful for the making of preserves and pickles. It has no commercial value. A few vines are valuable in the home garden. It can be grown in most parts of the province.

The Walnut Datana

The Walnut Datana caterpillar has put in an appearance here and is injuring the bitter and stag bark hickories and the black walnut. Kindly outline its life history and suggest a remedy.—J.M.F., Abbotsford, Que.

The Walnut Datana is frequently destructive on walnuts, hickories, oak and even apple trees. The female moth lays a large batch of eggs (50-100) on the surface of a leaf. The caterpillars require from four to six weeks to reach full growth. When about to moult, they descend to the trunk of the tree and collect in large numbers; at this time the whole batch is readily destroyed. When ready to pupate the caterpillars descend to the ground (usually at night) and burrow to a depth of two or three inches. There they change into naked brown pupæ and remain until the following July. There is, therefore, but one brood each season.

The best method of treatment is to destroy the caterpillars as they congregate on the trunk at moulting periods, and to destroy the pupæ in the ground

by allowing hogs to root in the infested area or by putting in poultry. Insecticides are hardly practicable.—Answered by Prof. W. Lochhead, St. Anne de Bellevue, Que.

White-Flowered Fuschias

Is there a fuschia with white flowers; if so, where can plants be obtained?—L.L.S., Moncton, N.B.

I do not know of a pure white-flowered fuchsia. There are several varieties with white corollas and colored sepals and vice versa. These can be obtained from the florists and plant men who advertise in the columns of THE HORTICULTURIST.—Answered by Thos. Manton, Eglinton, Ont.

Storing Flower Seeds

How and where should flower seeds be stored?—R.A.S., Calgary.

Seeds should be well dried before being stored. Spread them out thinly whether in or out of the pods, on trays or shelves, or in shallow boxes, in a dry airy room. When quite dry, place them in paper bags and hang the bags up in a dry cool room away from strong fire heat in a temperature of about 40 to 50 degrees. Dampness and extreme stove or artificial heat are not good for seeds. Pick seeds in dry weather.—Answered by Wm. Hunt, O.A.C., Guelph.

Fall Work with Asparagus

I have started a bed of asparagus. Does it require any attention this fall?—T.M.A., Windsor, Ont.

When the tops are sufficiently dried so they can be broken down by the harrow they should be raked together and burned. The surface of the bed should then have a top dressing of well-rotted stable manure which should be worked into the soil this fall. Manure left on the surface until spring will prevent early growth.

Wintering Parsnips

Is it profitable to leave parsnips in the ground all winter?—W.B.D., Sussex, N.B.

Digging and storing in well-ventilated bins in a cool cellar is the most profitable way of keeping parsnips. First, digging in the fall saves time in spring when labor is scarce. Second, you have a longer period to market in. Third, no matter how favorable the winter, you are bound to lose a percentage of crop wintered out of doors. Fourth, the best ground to raise parsnips on is a moist black loam which will always heave in

winter. Parsnips wintered outside have a superior flavor to that of cellar stowed, but all local growers agree that cellar wintering is by far the most profitable.—Answered by Thos. Stokes, Niagara Falls South.

Lettuce for Christmas

I have a small greenhouse and want to grow lettuce for Christmas. When should the seed be sown, and how should the young plants be cared for?—A.P., Kingston.

The seed should be sown about October 15. Sow in flats. When two or three inches high, transplant to the bench four inches apart each way. There it will develop to good-sized heads. Water only on bright days, and apply the water in the forenoon so that it will be dry before night. Apply direct to the soil. Do not sprinkle the plants as it will cause the heart to rot. Watering in dull weather or at night also induces rot.

Bleaching and Packing Celery

Kindly describe the best method of bleaching, packing and marketing celery, and suitable crate for shipping.—Wm. McS., Guelph.

Great care should be exercised in the bleaching of celery. To have nice, crisp, healthy stalks, the celery should be bleached before it reaches maturity. Boards should be used that will not reach to the top of the celery because, if they cover the leaves, the appearance will be spoiled. The boards first should be laid down close to the roots of the celery and then drawn up slowly, bringing up the stalks until the board becomes bound in the leaves. This will hold the board firmly and stakes will not be required.

Celery should be cut before becoming too white and allowed to whiten after packing in the crate. Great care should be used in washing. All dirt should be removed and then the stalks thoroughly washed in clean water. Never scrub celery with a stiff brush, because when scraped it will rust and spoil the appearance.

The best crate for shipping in summer and early fall is a slatted one, similar to the American berry crate. In winter a closed crate is better. Care should be used in sampling. By making two or more grades better results may be obtained. The celery should be packed in rows, laying it flat in the crate, and reversing each row until the crate is full. Cover with a wet cloth. Pack firmly and keep from the air.—Answered by Geo. Syme, Jr., Carlton West, Ont.