

ing space in these and packing in the winter is growing in favor with some. This allows of hauling to the station in the fall when the roads are possibly better, ensures a more even temperature for the apples during the winter, and comfortable quarters for packing. For those who have not frost-proof room at home for their apples this plan is a very good one, the cost being about 5 cents per barrel.

The universal package is the barrel of 96 quarts, or three bushels. This being the minimum lawful size for the Dominion—a package comfortably handled, and holding a definite amount—it is a regrettable matter that it cannot become the size for all America. We have succeeded in establishing a uniform apple box for the Dominion, and the sooner the size of the barrel becomes one size all over Canada the better for the industry. Surely, if those advocating the larger barrel would come down to the use of this size they would in the end be gainers, for the commission men would then find no chance for discrimination, and the large-barrel men would then get as much for the uniform small barrel as they do now for their larger one. It is only because the buyers have the two to compare that there is any discrimination in price. The 96-quart barrel will sell for as much as the 112-quart, if the latter is not on the market.

Boxes as yet are only used here experimentally, only a few apples having been shipped that way, and not with sufficient profit over the barrel to ensure a boom.

The Nova Scotia barrel is made generally of spruce or other soft wood—unplaned staves sawed with a cylinder saw, giving a circle about twenty inches in diameter; the heads are of the same material, and planed for stencilling. The hoops are made from split saplings of birch, maple and alder; these are shaved on one side, the other being left with the bark on. These make a very tough, light hoop, though not giving the barrel as good a finish to the eye as the flat hoop, very few of which are used. Six hoops are put on the barrel, two on each end and one on each side of the bulge.

The most common method of packing is to place the first layer next to the smooth head, with stem ends down, having first removed the projecting stems, this layer being generally slightly larger and of better color than the remainder, and of uniform size. The writer's own practice is to place the outer row to represent the minimum size in the barrel, the next row larger, with the largest in the center. This gives a better indication of the sizes found in the barrel, the sizes, of course, being as uniform as possible. Commonly, only two size are put up for market—firsts and seconds; all others are disposed of for vinegar or fed to stock. In packing, as to quality, the regulations of the Fruit Marks Act are generally regarded. Some variation as to stencilling exists, the two most popular methods of marking being the use of X's, and No. 1 and 2; XXX denotes firsts, XX seconds. The No. 1 and 2 are now becoming more popular, and it is hoped that we will soon have this method of marking used uniformly over the Dominion.

DISPOSING OF THE CROP.

There are three principal methods of getting returns from the apple crop:

1. Shipping through agents to firms on the "Other Side," to be sold on commission. This probably takes the bulk of the crop, especially early in the season when the later prices are doubtful, and the speculators do not care to buy for the sometimes large price that the farmer wants at that season. This system is yearly becoming more pernicious in its effect on the farmer's pocket. The apples are delivered to the agent at the stations, and the producer knows nothing more of the fruit until he gets from the agent, five weeks later, on account of sales which shows on its face several legitimate (?) expenses, such as trucking, commission, wharfage, lightage, etc., showing that the apples sold for a certain price per barrel, agreed on for the day or week by the combine of brokers. Sometimes, to get a little more out of a consignment, without stealing directly, from two to ten barrels are marked "slack," etc., thus allowing an apparently honest or legitimate deduction of from two to four shillings per barrel. The agent on this side gets from two per cent. to five per cent. commission from the English broker, and if he has sub-agents they get from one to two per cent. The agent also gets from ten cents to thirty cents per barrel rebate on each barrel shipped by him from the steamship companies. On the "Other Side" the broker takes out five per cent. commission besides what he gets by misrepresentation of quality, etc., as explained above. The farmer gets what is left, if any. Formerly, in some cases, the producer had to pay out money on his consignment for freight and expenses, but the combine has lately arranged that the prices shall at least cover expenses.

2. Selling out the orchard. This is something like the Ontario system. The speculators give a uniform price per barrel for all varieties, the grower packing and sorting into firsts and

seconds. Sometimes, however, the grower simply puts them into barrels as they come from the trees, the speculators doing the sorting. This approximates the fairest way of handling the fruit.

3. Selling different varieties at different prices as the season comes for shipping them.

PRICES.

These, of course, fluctuate from year to year; 1904 brought prices down. From 75c. to \$1.50 per barrel was realized. A good average for the past five years would perhaps be \$2.25 per barrel. The varieties bringing best prices generally are, in order of merit: Golden Russets, Kings, Spies, Nonpareils, and Baldwins.

R. J. MESSENGER.

Strawberries and Flowering Plants.

The strawberry season is now over, and thought quite naturally is turned to the problem of how we in the future can improve on this year's crop. More attention can possibly be given with profit to keeping the patch more free from weeds. Too much attention cannot be given to keeping the weeds and grass down the first year. For this purpose the twelve-tooth Planet Jr. horse cultivator works admirably. The ground can be worked close to the plants without covering them, and very little hand hoeing is necessary. Cultivation must necessarily be largely done away with after early in August; consequently, hand hoeing takes its place, for weeds and grass will start up in the fall, and it pays well to go through the patch and remove all of these.

Those who have thought that they could take off profitable crops two years in succession, when the plants are grown in the matted row system, usually find that it doesn't pay. The fruit is generally inferior, and the yield small. That at least has been our experience here, and the experience of others that we know of. The most profitable way we find is to start a new plantation every year, and plow under the plants as soon as one crop has been taken off.

The ground on which the berry patch is to be set next year should be this year in a hoed crop, from which all weeds have been kept free. A good clover sod turned under also gives excellent results. I, however, much prefer the former, and to it should be added 10 to 15 tons of rotted stable manure per acre in the fall, and lightly plowed under. If manure is not used, a fertilizer of bone meal and complete fertilizer, about 500 lbs. of each per acre, should be applied broadcast in the spring, after the land has been well prepared for planting and harrowed in.

The best land for strawberries is a light, naturally well-drained, loamy soil. Heavy clay soils should be avoided as far as possible for commercial plantations.

The variety Senator Dunlop has given us excellent results in our tests here. We have no hesitation in recommending this variety. It has perfect flowers; firm, good, large fruit; a vigorous vine. It, however, is inclined to ripen slowly at the tip end, which is quite a disadvantage. The Warfield still continues to be one of our best sorts.

Now is the time to start perennial and biennial flowering plants. For this purpose the most satisfactory method is to use a cold frame, and from this the seedlings can be transplanted easily in the early spring. This method I find quite satisfactory for starting pansies, larkspurs, Iceland poppy, Oriental poppy, clove or grass pinks, sweet William, columbine, saponaria, Canterbury bells, Gaillardia perennis, foxglove, Scotch daisy, etc. The seed is scattered thinly in rows, four inches apart. The bed is shaded until the majority of the seedlings appear. The best shade is of lath lattice-work, placing the laths about one-half inch apart, using only four or five laths to go crosswise. Cotton makes a very good shade. The majority of perennial flowering seeds require considerable time to germinate, and do so much better if shaded as indicated.

Watering must be carefully done, and the ground not kept too wet, although at the same time not allowed to dry out. The surface of the cold-frame bed must be given drainage late in the fall, if the frame sets closely on the soil and holds the water. After the ground has frozen up, the bed should be covered with boards to shed the rain. If the bed is where it will drift over with snow so much the better. We obtain the best from above-named plants when handled in this way.

W. S. BLAIR, Nova Scotia.

Fruit Prospects Not Good.

An analysis of the reports of correspondents to date shows a continued falling off from the good indications of previous reports. Fungous diseases are beginning to show seriously, though insects are not as prevalent as usual.

Apples will be a light crop, probably about 50% of last year's crop. It must not be forgotten, however, that the general scarcity will prevent any waste such as has been common for the last two years. Sales are being made at \$1 to \$1.25 for No. 1's and 2's on the trees. Barrels are lower in price than last year, running from 25c. in Nova Scotia to 30c. and 35c. in Ontario, but where proper arrangements have not been made early in the season, prices are likely to go higher than this.

Pears will be a very light crop, scarcely enough for the local market. Blight has worked sad havoc in many orchards this year.

Plums.—The "drop" and plum rot have lessened the prospect for plums to such an extent that the prospects can be rated for a light to medium crop. The Lombard, barring rot, appears to be the only plum that stands out prominently with a fairly good yield, except the Abundance.

Peaches show a light crop in the Essex and Kent district; a medium crop on bearing trees in the Niagara district. The market will not be overloaded.

Sweet cherries have rotted badly; sour cherries have been a medium crop, though badly infested in many cases with fruit worm. Small fruits have been a medium crop, realizing good prices.

The reports from Great Britain and the continent would indicate a light to medium crop. Reports from twenty of the largest apple-growing American States show seventeen States having a light or poor apple crop; some a failure; three, Wisconsin, Kansas and Oklahoma, report the crop promising or good.

Careful estimates by correspondents place the exports from the Annapolis Valley at 200,000 barrels. The apple crop in British Columbia is below the average, but a considerable increase in the acreage will make the exports into the Northwest Territories somewhat larger than last year.

It is pleasing to note the increased confidence in the effect of spraying. There are several enquiries for power machines.

A. MCNEILL,
Chief, Fruit Division.

POULTRY.

Rape Feeding and Eggs.

I have twenty chickens, and some of them were sick. Early in the spring I gave them turpentine and linseed oil, but think them all right now, except one, and she does not lay any eggs. Our eggs always looked healthy till a week ago, when we discovered a greenish look in them. I threw them all away, thinking them bad eggs. When they are soft-boiled they look almost black. We have rape in our garden, and the chickens are eating it. Do you think the rape makes the eggs look like that? What is wrong; are they good or not? Are they all right to put under a setting hen?

W. E.

Ans.—I have not in my experience seen eggs similar to those mentioned in the letter. I am quite sure that the rape fed to the fowls would not give such peculiar eggs. This much, however, must be taken into consideration, that eggs are flavored to a considerable extent by the food fed. For instance, scorched grain will produce eggs with a scorched flavor. I think if the correspondent would enclose the hens in a small run or building where they can get nothing but good fresh water and grass in addition to a good grain ration of wheat, barley and oats, that the eggs, in the course of ten days or two weeks, would become perfectly normal. If they do not, I would be pleased to hear from the correspondent, and perhaps we could make some arrangement to make a thorough examination of the chickens.

W. R. GRAHAM.

Ontario Agricultural College.

Minorcas as Egg Producers.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

I notice in your issue of July 20th an article headed, "To Increase the Size of Eggs." Now, sir, in my small experience in the poultry business I know of no way one can feed to increase the size of the egg, but I know of several ways by which the eggs can be improved on by special breeding. If your correspondent would try some pure Black Minorcas, or even cross Minorcas, with his heavy breed, he would see a great improvement in the size of the egg. I have Buff Orpingtons, Wyandottes, Leghorns, and a dozen eggs from those breeds will weigh about twenty ounces, while a dozen eggs from the Black Minorcas that I advertised through your poultry columns will weigh 33 ounces. I think people who keep poultry for egg production should keep some breed that lays large eggs. With me, under the same conditions, the Black Minorcas lay just as well as the Leghorns, while the eggs are much larger. Again, when you dress a Minorca, you have a very fair-sized bird. Look at the credit the Minorcas received as dressed poultry at the last winter fair at Guelph, Ont. Now, sir, I have three of the same breeds that your correspondent has, and I am a lover of some varieties of Leghorns, but when it comes to the size and quantity of eggs, I cannot turn down the Black Minorcas.

W. M.

Lambton Co., Ont.

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