


THE FALL FAIR AS A HORTICULTURAL EDUCATOR.

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 HE fall fair has not, as a rule, been looked upon as one of the branches of our educational system; but it is, nevertheless, one of the farmer's schools where valuable information may be imparted, and lessons of the most practical kind may be learned by means of object lessons.

There has been much discussion of late about increasing the educational value of these fairs by the employment of expert judges—men who could not only award the prizes properly, but could for the benefit of those present give good reasons for their decisions. This would certainly be a move in the right direction, but before any material improvement in this way can be made along the line of horticultural education; we believe it will be necessary to begin further back, and revise or remodel a majority of the prize lists; for, unless the prize list is arranged to bring out a good display of fruit of the right kinds, the expert judge, no matter how expert he may be, will be seriously handicapped in his efforts to impart information.

My attention was first called to the great necessity for improvement along this line last summer, when I was asked to revise the horticultural section of the prize list of one of our leading county exhibitions; and it struck me very forcibly that if so much revision was necessary in the case of one of the leading exhibitions, what must it be with many of the smaller fairs, where less attention is given to the prize list?

Since then I have taken the trouble to examine carefully a large number of the lists from all parts of the country, and I can assure you the greater number of our fall fairs are coming far short of providing the

education they might from a horticultural standpoint.

I would like, therefore, to offer a few suggestions as to how these fairs might be made of much greater value to the people of all parts of the province, by spreading reliable information relative to fruit growing.

1. Every prize list should be made to encourage the production and exhibition of every class of fruit which may be successfully grown and shown in the section. In the most favorable fruit sections, many of the lists are made to include most of the fruit grown there, and which are in season at the time of the fair, such as apples, pears, grapes, plums, peaches, quinces, etc., but the greater number of them stop short at apples, pears, and grapes, and make no mention of any other kinds of fruit, whatever. Now this is not because other kinds of fruit cannot be grown, for even in the least favorable fruit sections of the province plums of the American type are quite hardy and can be grown to perfection. In some cases where the fairs are held late in the season, it may, of course, be difficult to keep such fruit in condition till fair time, but in a good cool cellar many of the latter kinds might easily be kept for some time. I am inclined to believe it would be a wise plan to place on the lists even the earlier or more perishable fruits, such as strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and currants, and allow these to be shown in preservative fluids in ordinary gem jars, so as to show the fruits as nearly as possible in the natural condition. Mr. C. C. Caston made an exhibit of this kind at the Barrie Fair a year ago, which attracted great attention, and which was