

## THE CULTURE OF BLACK CURRANTS.



NOTHING is easier of culture than the black currant, as it grows and bears well in any tolerable garden soil. To propagate them it is only necessary to plant in autumn or early spring, cuttings a foot long, in the open field or garden, and cultivate them; they will root readily. The black currant should never be allowed to produce suckers, and in order to prevent this, the superfluous buds should be knocked off when the plants are transplanted. This will keep them always in the shape of trees, with single stems and heads branching out at from 12 to 20 inches from the ground.

Thin out the useless wood every winter, and if extra large fruit is desired, pinch off all the ends of the strong-growing shoots about the middle of June, when the fruit is about half grown, thus keeping the plant from spending all its energy in producing too much wood. I prefer, for large plantations, Black Naples, Champion, and Collins' Prolific. I prefer to plant in check rows,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet each way. Perhaps there is no place in the world where better black currants are grown than Great Britain and Holland. They are called currant trees, often having clean stems on them three and four feet high. Keeping a clean stem from 12 to 20 inches, enables one not only to till them easier, but to use a picker, which I will endeavor to describe: It is in the shape of an inverted umbrella cover—see Fig. 780. Put a canvas cover on the inside of the ribs of a large bamboo-ribbed umbrella; take out the braces and handle. To keep its shape opened out, two steel No. 9 wires are fastened on the inside by being wired to each rib, one near the outside, and the other near the bottom. These give enough spring to clasp it around a stem, as it has to be opened only about one inch to let the stem through the slot on the side to the centre of the picker. The whole is mounted on three portable legs made of umbrella braces. Near

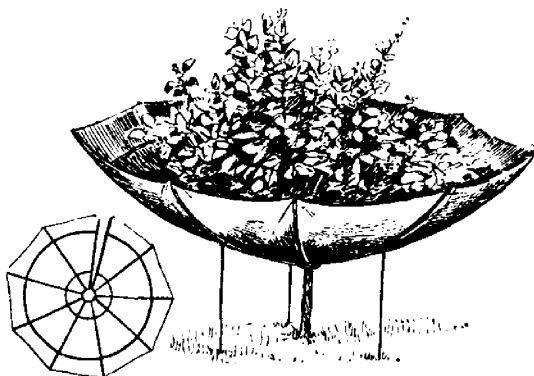


FIG. 780—A PICKER FOR BLACK CURRANTS.