

For several years the cherry crop of Vaca Valley, in Solano County, Cal., has not been good, although it was formerly quite sure. The partial or complete failures have been attributed to north winds, chilling rains and similar climatic conditions, but in the minds of Messrs. Bassford, of Cherry Glen, these causes did not sufficiently account for all the cases of failure.

These gentlemen recollected that formerly when the cherry crops were good wild bees were very plentiful in the valley, and hence thought perhaps the lack of fruit since most of the bees had disappeared might be due to imperfect distribution of the pollen of the blossoms. To test the matter they placed therefore several hives of bees in their orchard in 1890. The result was striking, for the Bassford orchard bore a good crop of cherries while other growers, in the valley, who had no bees found their crops entire or partial failures. This year, (1891) Messrs. Bassford had some 65 hives of bees in their orchard, and Mr. H. A. Bassford writes to the Entomologist: "Our crop was good this season, and we attribute it to the bees." And he adds further: "Since we have been keeping bees our cherry crop has been much larger than formerly, while those orchards nearest us, five miles from here, where no bees were kept, have produced but light crops."

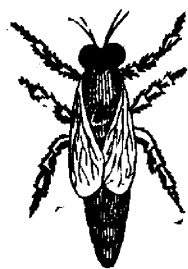


FIG. 556.—WORKER.

In conclusion we may say, that in the cuts we give, the worker bee alone causes the fertilization of bloom. The queen is the mother bee, the drone, the male and the workers are the neuters who gather from honey flowers.

It often happens that alongside the edges of shrubbery and plant borders, and by the margins of flower beds the grass gets killed out by over-spreading plants from the beds; the best way to mend these is by resodding. If you rooted out any tree stumps or rocks in your lawn a year or two ago, there will likely be a hollow there now; if there is, skin off the sod, and fill up the basin enough to make it even with the rest of the lawn, and relay the sod again. If there are any big weeds in your lawn like mulleins, docks, chicory, dandelions, pull them out by the root some wet day. If mouse-ear chickweed, common chickweed, creeping spenwell or the like fill patches of your lawn, scratch them out with a steel rake, and at once sow some grass seed there. Wild onions are always in a hurry up in spring, in wet weather you can pull them up by the roots in bunches; at any rate, take a sharp scythe and go over your lawns and fields mowing down these onions before you turn your cows out to pasture, else they will have onion-tasted milk.

In pruning peach trees they should be headed low. Sufficient cultivation should be given to keep the soil reasonably clean and in good tilth.