

Valuable Orchard Land in the Making

An enthusiastic orchardist has said to me: "If the farmers along the lake front between Toronto and Montreal would set out their land to apple trees they would make their land worth in the course of a few years from \$300 to \$600 an acre, whereas now it is worth from \$60 to \$80, and in some few cases, a possible \$100 per acre. Furthermore a mature, good bearing apple orchard will give returns of 15 per cent annually on a valuation of \$1,000 per acre."

I am somewhat of an enthusiast about orchard work, and while I have heard leading reputable apple growers make the statement at general public meetings that they received returns from their apple orchards equal to 15 per cent on a valuation of \$1,000 an acre, I never cared to talk too much about it. I thought these must be special cases, and peculiar soil conditions as well as climate would be necessary to get these returns. But practical experience and first-hand observation in many districts of Ontario during the past several years have caused me to accept this statement as "gospel" truth.

HOW TO IMPROVE SOIL CONDITIONS

Not all land in its natural condition is adapted to apple growing. But lately we have found out that much of it can be improved and apple trees made to thrive grandly thereon. I refer particularly to those clay formations having impervious subsoil and hard-pan. These may be broken up by means of blasting powder, or dynamite, and the trees afterwards set will thrive as they do on naturally favorable soil.

Stumping powder in orchard work has several uses, one of the chief of which is in connection with setting out young trees. It saves much labor and time in planting the trees and ensures an open porous subsoil, conducive to the best growth and large ultimate yields of fruit.

The work of excavating for a tree, to do it properly by the old method of hand digging, may take an hour. Stumping powder will excavate it in an instant. The spaded hole will be hard all the way down, making it difficult for the transplanted roots to take hold, which is one of the chief reasons why transplanted trees so often die.

HOW A VIRGINIAN FARMER PLANTS TREES

Down in the New England States, notably in Virginia, stumping powder and dynamite have been used with great success in connection with orchard work. The following is the testimony of a Virginian farmer who has used dynamite in orchard farming and writes of his experience for Rural Life:

"I have just finished the planting of 700 trees, beautifully located on a southern slope, with an altitude of 525 feet. The soil in this locality is red clay, with a slaty subsoil, so we think the only way to be successful with fruit trees is to blow up the planting holes with dynamite.

"I prefer the ground to be first drilled out three feet deep, then shoot one stick of dynamite in the bottom. This does not always blow it out to any great extent, but it turns the soil over, breaks up the slate and aerates the subsoil. This method we believe will put our slaty soil in condition to produce better apples and more of them."

And so it is with many of us farmers in Ontario and other fruit growing provinces of Canada,—we can, by taking thought, make our land more suitable for apple growing, ensuring the success

of our newly set apple trees, and thereby greatly increase our land in productiveness and in real value.—C. C. N.

Tomatoes.—We start the first tomato plants about March first, and we like to pinch them out often. As soon as they have four leaves on we



Strawberry Culture on a Commercial Scale as Practised in Ontario

Mr. Jas. E. Johnson of Norfolk, Ont., is widely known as a successful apple grower. It is not so well known that he derives a large revenue from strawberries as well. A view of his extensive strawberry plantation is here shown. Where one can get lots of help at picking time strawberries on a commercial scale may be very profitable.

pinch them out again. You get a better looking plant by firming the soil. We transplant three times—often four. We leaf them in shallow flats. Spark's Earliana is grown for the majority. Chalk's Early Jewel is a fine looking tomato, but two weeks late with us.—J. L. Hilburn, Essex Co., Ont.



A Case Where Thinning Would Have Been Advisable

The apples on this well loaded limb, taken from the orchard of Robt. Ball, Westmoreland Co., N.B., are too close together to produce finest quality fruit. Thinning would have improved the quality of the fruit and made a crop the next year more certain.

Sound Arguments for Thinning Fruit

J. W. Clarke, Brant Co., Ont.

Thinning apples when on the trees pays, especially if we pack and ship ourselves. When apples are properly thinned, the crop will be 90 per cent No. 1. The packer can easily pay one dollar a barrel more on the tree for apples such as this than he could for apples which had not been thinned, and which would need much culling and grading. Of course thinning takes considerable time, but this is made up to a large extent if we pick the apples ourselves. With large trees a man will thin three trees a day, and we can afford to pay a man \$2 a day to thin the fruit.

In thinning, we aim to pick out the smallest, the ill-shaped and the wormy apples. If two apples are touching one another, one of them is removed. As a rule, the top of the tree will not require much thinning, as most of the fruit is found on the lower branches.

CROPS EVERY YEAR

With proper management, apple trees should produce a fair crop every year. One of the best methods of obtaining this end is by thinning the fruit. An excessively full crop should be thinned by all means. In 1905, our thinned orchard produced a crop of 500 barrels.

Thinning, combined with proper pruning and cultivation, produces apples of exceptional quality. The previous owner of the orchard who we now have, said that it would not produce good apples; and the apples that he got certainly were small and poor. He advised us to cut the trees down. Since then the orchard has received proper spraying, pruning, fertilizing, and last, but not least, thinning. From these same trees we have picked apples which on several occasions won the county prize at the Horticultural Exhibition in Toronto.

Experience with Strawberries

E. B. Stevenson, Wellington Co., Ont.

I have never had my ground too rich for strawberries. I plant roots and manure well for the two years preceding the strawberry year, then give an extra coat of well rotted stable manure, well worked in before planting.

I plant rows three feet apart and the plants two feet in the row. When planting is over I go over the ground with a fine toothed cultivator and keep this up about once a week through the growing season. After the plants have stopped growing and the ground is frozen in the fall, I cover the whole bed with strawy manure to a depth of two or three inches; in the spring I rake this into the paths for a mulch to keep the berries clean.

I then spray with lime and sulphur, to kill the rust that may appear before the blossoms open, and again just after the fruit has set. I grow the plants for fruit in the narrow rows as I find I get finer fruit than in the wide matted row.

The necessity of spraying with fungicides and insecticides to insure a crop of marketable apples is almost universally conceded by growers. Occasionally one is found who says he does not spray and yet his apples are as good as his neighbors'; with such as he it is of no use to argue, one can only say "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."—S. C. Parker, King's Co., N. S.

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