

THE ONTARIO FRUIT EXPERIMENT STATIONS *

REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR, PROF. H. L. HUTT, O. A. C., GUELPH.

THE past year was one of the most trying that Ontario fruit growers have experienced in a long time. The extreme severity of the winter of 1903-4 caused the loss of at least one-third of the fruit trees of the province. This loss was not confined to any particular section, but was more or less general throughout Ontario. On the whole, the Niagara district suffered less than most others, the injury being confined mostly to the loss of fruit-buds. In the Essex district hundreds of acres of peach orchards were destroyed, while plums, cherries, and even apples, were more or less seriously injured.

In northern and central Ontario more than half of the plum and pear trees were winter killed, and many varieties of apples proved too tender. In eastern Ontario apples are the principal tree fruits grown, and the most of these are of the hardier varieties, but in many cases even the so-called hardy varieties were winter killed, particularly where the trees had borne heavily the previous season. This fact was evident in all sections; that those trees which were over-loaded in 1903 and consequently were somewhat weakened by the heavy drain upon the vitality of the tree, suffered most severely from the severity of the winter. An excellent example of this was afforded in the orchard of Harold Jones, Maitland, where a dozen or more of his Fameuse trees most heavily loaded in 1903 died in 1904, and one tree, which bore heavily on one side only, is dead upon that side, and so far quite healthy on the other.

On account of the great loss of trees throughout the country there will necessarily be an extra lot of replanting to do next spring. For this reason I have made it a point to get from each of the experimenters a carefully prepared list of the

varieties of the different kinds of fruit he would recommend for planting in his section. These lists, coming as they do from men of wide experience in fruit growing, are of particular value to intending planters.

THE SOUTHWESTERN STATION.

This station, which is in charge of Mr. W. W. Hilborn, of Leamington, is in the centre of what has been regarded as the finest peach section in Ontario. Many growers had gone so extensively into peach culture that they had 50 to 100 acres of peach trees in bearing. The first great set back came with the severe winter of 1898 and 1899, when 50 per cent. of the trees were winter killed. Mr. Hilborn at that time had 100 acres of peach trees just nicely bearing, but lost all but four or five acres. Since then he had been replanting till he had about 80 acres in trees. Last winter, however, killed out nearly every peach tree on his place, and I heard it stated that there was probably not ten acres of healthy peach orchard left in all of that district. Mr. Hilborn is not discouraged, however, but would like to plant again a small orchard of the leading varieties for experimental work.

The following is a list of the varieties of peaches, plums and cherries which Mr. Hilborn recommends for planting in his section:

PEACHES: Alexander, Yellow St. John, Brigden, Early Crawford, Fitzgerald, New Prolific, Engol Mammoth, Elberta, Crosby, Kalamazoo, Golden Drop, Banner, and Smock.

PLUMS: Burbank, Satsuma, Bradshaw, Lombard, Monarch, Imperial Gage, and Reine Claude.

CHERRIES: Napoleon Bigarreau, Mer-cer, Schmidt's Bigarreau, Yellow Spanish, Windsor Montmorency, and Early Richmond.

* This report was presented to the Board of Control of the Fruit Experiment Stations at the time of the Provincial Fruit Flower and Honey Show.