Issued Each Week

FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME

Only $1.00 a Year

Vol. XXX. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 2, 1911. No. 9

HOW TO ENSURE A 90 PER CENT. SALEABLE APPLE CROP

Prof. J. W. Crow, O.A.C., Guelph, Ont.

Better Averages Than 90 Per Cent. Have Been Secured — Work That Returns Over 300 Per Cent. on Labor Expended—Incidentally it Ensures an Annual Load of Apples.

IT has been asked of me how I would go to work in order to secure *annual crops of apples, ninety per cent. of which will grade No. 1.* When one reflects that, taken one year with another, the apple crop of Ontario grades probably less than 20 per cent. first class—and when one remembers, too, that a large percentage of our orchards bear full crops not more than two or three years out of five—this seems rather a large order. However, it is a good thing to have our attention drawn to the possibilities of our business so that we will have something to work for. The mark might be set at 100 per cent instead of 90 per cent. perfect.

J. W. Crow.

The one point in this consideration on which I feel like placing special emphasis is one which has at no time received with us as much attention as it deserves. Many are doing all that can be done in cultivating, pruning, and spraying; even in the matter of fertilizing some seem to have gone as far as is possible. Yet we know, however, that orchard packing out 75 per cent. of strictly first class fruit have hitherto been very scarce in Ontario. *Proper thinning would give us many crops running as high as 90 or even 95 per cent. perfect fruit.*

GREAT RETURNS FOR LABOR

Such averages have been attained in other countries; they can be gotten here. And, furthermore, let me point out that no orchard operation will make a better return on the labor and capital invested than will thinning. Let us take a case in point. An average crop from a well cared for 10-acre orchard would be 800 barrels, including culls. Suppose No. 1 are worth $3.00 a bbl.; No. 2, $2.50; and culls, 15c. a bushel. Let us say this orchard will run 50 per cent. No. 1, 40 per cent. No. 2, and 10 per cent. culls. We have therefore:

800 Bbls.	50 %	No. 1 = 400 Bbls.	@ $3.00 =	$1200
"	40 %	No. 2 = 320 "	@ 2.50 =	800
"	10 %	Culls = 80 "	@ 45c =	36
		800		$2036

Let us thin this orchard and find out if it pays:

800 Bbls.	90 %	No. 1 = 720 Bbls.	@ $3.00 =	$2160
"	10 %	No. 2 = 80 Bbls.	@ 2.50 =	200
		No Culls		

Value of Thinned Crop ..... = $2360
Value of Unthinned Crop ..... = $2036

Increased Value Due to Thinning ..... = $324

As to the cost of doing the work, it may be said that five cents a barrel will cover most cases. Some growers in Ontario have kept within that figure, and in New York State and other districts this amount is said to represent the actual cost of doing the work. Double this amount of cost of you like and we have $80.00 as the outside cost of thinning an 800 barrel crop. The sum of $80.00 subtracted from $324.00 leaves $244.00 as the actual profit from thinning. Where can you invest to better advantage? *Three hundred per cent. on your money is "good enough for a farmer."*

I am firmly convinced that in many cases these figures can be not only equalled but actually exceeded. Let our expert orchardists examine them, and if fault can be found I shall be pleased to see them discussed in the columns of Farm and Dairy.

RESULTS THAT COUNT

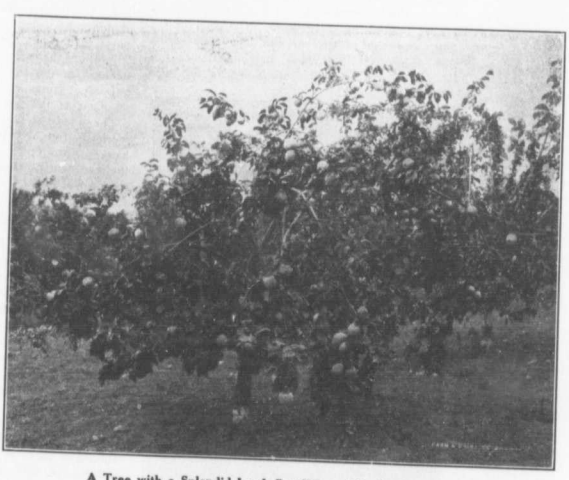
The best argument for thinning is the results. If Farm and Dairy readers could see some of the Pacific slope orchards, just before picking time, they would at once be convinced. I have walked through orchards in which it was practically impossible to find a cull apple—no worms, no scab, no small or poorly colored specimens—none but the best specimens are allowed to remain, and in many instances our standard of 90 per cent. perfect has been considerably exceeded. Some crops have been harvested that graded 95 and even *98 per cent. strictly first class.*

INSURES ANNUAL CROPS

And then, too, there are other points to be considered. Not only is it possible to vastly improve the grade of fruit, but it is also possible by thinning to assist materially in securing annual crops. To thin properly, a definite number of apples should be decided upon for each tree, according to size and variety. A tree should not be allowed to bear more apples than it can bring to full size. If more than that number are left the average size is reduced without increasing the actual bulk of fruit, and in addition the energies of the tree are exhausted. It must be remembered that a tree aims, so to speak, at producing seeds, not fruit, and five barrels of small apples are produced at much greater cost to the tree than five barrels of large ones. If overbearing is prevented the tree can be expected to bear again the following season. As a matter of actual fact, the securing of annual crops is simply a matter of nourishing the tree properly and then preventing the exhaustion caused by overbearing.

PRUNING DOES NOT SUFFICE

Pruning is one method of thinning, and correct pruning aims at securing an even distribution of bearing wood throughout the entire tree. This frequently means the severe thinning out of small branches and improves the grade of fruit, first, by increasing the size through reducing the number, and second, by admitting light to all parts of the tree in sufficient quantity to cause proper coloring. But thinning can not stop with pruning. Even after a tree is correctly pruned there may be, and usually are, too many fruits,



A Tree with a Splendid Load, But What of it the Next Year?

This 11-year-old apple tree is loaded beyond the limit of safety. It would have paid to have thinned the fruit on the tree. Read Professor Crow's article adjoining, which gives some exceedingly interesting information about thinning apples.