

## Notes on the Old Country Markets

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**I**N no other market of the world is the question of packing and packages so important as in England, where purchasers of all classes of goods are accustomed to see them put up attractively as well as substantially. This is particularly the case with fruit, whether it be the package used in transit or that in which it is displayed for sale, and it is on this side that competent observers declare Canadians to be behind some of their competitors.

A few words, therefore, on the various packages seen on the British market may not be amiss, even though it would not be desirable in every case for Canadians to copy the methods of the Old Country or of other competitors.

### SMALL FRUITS

Taking first small fruit, such as strawberries, raspberries and currants, the popular package used in the home market is what is known as the "chip," an oblong basket commonly measuring twelve inches by six and one-half inches and holding about six pounds of fruit, provided with a handle of wood or metal. These are, in fact, very similar to Canadian ten-pound grape baskets, but slightly wider, shallower and shorter. Strawberries are picked direct into these baskets, and are sometimes shipped away without any covering. At the most a piece of thin pink or white paper is placed over the fruit, the edges turned down and tied with string running round the outside of the basket.

The old method consisted of packing and shipping the fruit on wooden trays, holding twelve pounds each, which trays were returnable by the railways. The "chip" is considered in every way superior to the

tray, whether for berries or for currants.

French shippers send to this market large quantities of strawberries packed in small wooden boats, which consist simply of a flat bottom with sides and ends sloping outwards, barge-like. These are filled with fruit and then tied together in pairs, each forming, as it were, a cover for the other. The "boat" holds from three to four pounds of fruit, and owing to its solidity and the ease with which the double package can be tossed from hand to hand in transshipment (there being no vacant space to allow play for the fruit) this style of package seems quite popular, and was strongly supported at a recent meeting of fruit growers, convened to consider the question of improvements.

### PLUMS

English plums are usually sent to market in round and rather shallow wicker baskets. They are called "half-sieves" or "half-bushels," and hold about twenty-four pounds of plums. They usually have the name of the dealer printed on the outside, and are called "returnables," as they have to be sent back to the dealer, having cost him about one shilling each. This kind of package is also very popular for gooseberries, best pears and cherries.

Choice plums have been shipped somewhat extensively from South Africa here, with success. They have been packed in shallow wooden cases about three inches deep, well protected with wood wool at top and bottom of case, each fruit being wrapped in paper.

The package considered most suitable for peaches is the shallow wooden case about four inches deep. The bottom should be

covered with a thick pad of fine wood-wool, on which the peaches are placed, each wrapped in paper, and separated from another by little pads of the packing material. Another layer of wood-wool should cover all.

Holland has been sending peaches to this market, and on the whole the experiment was proved successful. They also adopted the single layer package now so popular, but used a different kind of packing. Instead of wood-wool, cotton-wool was utilized. The boxes were first of all lined with this material; then each peach was wrapped in it, and wads of the same placed between as a protection against bruising. This packing material, however, is considered here to be much too "heating," and the wood-wool is declared to be superior in every way.

### PEARS

Home-grown pears are packed in the same way as plums in round, shallow wicker baskets—and it is said that it will be difficult to improve on this kind of package.

French pears come to England packed in two-layer wooden cases, commonly made of slat-wood, holding about twelve pounds of fruit. The pears are placed on a bed of wood-wool and covered with another layer. More pears are placed on top of this, and a further pad of wood-wool covers all. These pears carry very well, but some receivers would prefer that each fruit should be wrapped in paper.

As is very well known to Canadian exporters, quite the most familiar package for apples in these markets is the barrel, which occurs in three types—the flat-topped Canadian barrel, the Nova Scotia spruce barrel with half-round hoops, and the United States barrel, which is simi-

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