

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.**STRAWBERRY CULTURE.**

Ellwanger & Barry, of Rochester, N. Y., give the following directions for the garden culture of strawberries: For family use it is recommended to plant in beds four feet wide, with an alley two feet wide between. These beds will accommodate three rows of plants, which may stand fifteen inches apart each way, and the outside row nine inches from the alley. These beds can be kept clean, and the fruit can be gathered from them without setting the feet upon them.

Culture in hills is the best mode that can be adopted for the garden. To obtain fine, large, high-flavoured fruit, pinch off the runners as fast as they appear, repeating the operation as often as may be necessary during the summer. Every runner thus removed produces a new crown at the centre of the plant, and in the fall the plants will have formed large bushes or stools, on which the finest strawberries may be expected the following season. In the meantime the ground among the plants should be kept clear of weeds and frequently stirred with a hoe or fork.

Where the winters are severe, with little snow for protection, a slight covering of leaves or litter, or the branches of evergreens, will be of great service. This covering should not be placed over the plants till after the ground is frozen, usually from the middle of November till the first of December, the time varying in different localities. Fatal errors are often made by putting on too much and too early. Care must also be taken to remove the covering in Spring, just as soon as the plants begin to grow.

Before the fruit begins to ripen, mulch the ground among the plants with short hay, or straw, or grass mowings from the lawn, or anything of that sort. This will not only keep the fruit clean, but will prevent the ground from drying and baking, and thus lengthen the fruiting season. Tan bark can also be used as a mulch.

The strawberry may be successfully grown in any soil adapted to the growth of ordinary field or garden crops. The ground should be well prepared by trenching or ploughing at least eighteen to twenty inches deep, and be properly enriched as for any garden crop. Of course, if the land is wet, it must be thoroughly drained. In the Northern States the season for planting in the spring is during the months of April and May. It may then be done with safety from the time the plants begin to grow until they are in blossom. This time is preferred by successful cultivators for setting out large plantations of layer plants. A bed of strawberries managed in accordance with the directions contained in the above paragraphs will give two full crops; and should then be spaded or ploughed down, a new one having been, in the meantime, prepared to take its place.

For field culture on a large scale the same directions with regard to soil, time of planting, protection and mulching as given above are applicable. The matted row system—the mode of growing usually pursued—has its advantages for field culture, but cannot be recommended for the garden. In the field, experts

usually plant in rows three to four feet apart, and the plants a foot to a foot and a-half apart, in the row. In this case much of the labour is performed with the horse and cultivator. The number of plants required for an acre, at any given distance apart, may be ascertained by dividing the number of square feet in an acre, 43,560, by the number of square feet given to each plant, which is obtained by multiplying the distance between rows by the distance between the plants. Thus, strawberries planted three feet by one foot, give each plant three square feet, or 14,520 plants to the acre.

PECULIARITIES OF THE APPLE.

The earliest sorts, June and July apples, generally bear annually, or a full crop one year and a fair or moderate crop the next. Having delivered their crops early they have August and September for continued growth and recuperation, and are enabled to form mature fruit-buds for the next season. We have a striped June apple tree that has seldom or never failed to give a good crop every year.

The late winter sorts have not this advantage, as growth for the season is over after the fruit is gathered, and the natural consequence is that there are few or no fruit-buds for the next year. Late summer and early fall apple trees may be induced to give fair crops almost every year if they have generous soil, with abundant nutrition; otherwise, like the late winter sorts, the next season is required to form fruit-buds and their bearing is restricted to every other year. So it pays to feed and take care of the trees.

The apple trees requires good rich soil and plenty of it to insure annual crops and healthy growth. The soil naturally is never too rich, and the trees are rarely surfeited or injured by heavy manuring—but this is sometimes the case. As a rule orchards are grievously mismanaged or neglected. The cultivation of young trees should be as regularly and carefully done as that for the corn and vegetable crops. The surface needs frequent but shallow stirring, especially under the branches if high-topped. If low, which is best, especially for southern orchards, no ploughing should be attempted immediately under the trees to bruise the fruit and branches.

We believe low-branched trees are better for several reasons. No sun-scauld can affect the trunks, no suckers are produced from torn roots, the feeding roots and trunks are protected from the three o'clock sun. The best fruit is always on the middle and lower branches; and the convenience of gathering the fruit without bruising is far greater with low-headed trees. The windfalls are but little injured. If straw or soft litter is spread beneath, the apples can be shaken off with little or no bruising, but it is best to hand-gather. With these advantages low heads must be the most profitable as well as natural.

As a rule, red apples sell much the best in market, hence we find the Baldwins in most common demand. While this apple is a good keeper, its quality, every one knows, is inferior to many varieties that might be named. However, our orchard should consist largely of Baldwin trees.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THINGS seem to die, but die not; the spring showers
Die on the bosom of the motherly earth,
But rise again in fruits and leaves and flowers;
And every death is nothing but a birth.

It is easy to start tomato plants in the kitchen window and good ones, too. A little sawdust on the soil will prevent baking.

HOT-BEDS for raising seedling plants for the garden are to be started about six weeks before the time at which it will be safe to set out the plants. Sashes should be got ready; paint if need be and replace broken lights.

HERE is a hint for potato-growers. A man used one quart of sawdust in each hill of potatoes in one plot and none in another. The sawdust-hills yielded nearly twice as much as the others and the tubers were larger and smoother.

TEST the seeds by placing fifty or a hundred between sheets of blotting paper, two or three on each side. Keep it damp, warm and dark. Radish seed will germinate in ten hours; cabbage in eighteen, and corn in thirty-six. That's easily done, and it may save you much trouble, time and money.

A MASSACHUSETTS farmer who raises asparagus extensively says that an application of salt is of no use whatever, being only a practice that has been handed down through several generations. Perhaps the necessity for salt is lessened when asparagus is raised near the sea, where the soil and atmosphere are both impregnated with salt.

A WRITER in *Gardening Illustrated* says that if young shoots of the tomato are taken off and propagated like bedding plants, they will make a less rampant growth than seedlings, and be more fruitful. Cuttings prove best for pot culture; they are then to be kept near the glass with a temperature of about fifty degrees. They will make fine plants by spring.

WEEDS on gravel walks may be destroyed and prevented from growing again by a copious dressing of the cheapest salt. This is a better method than hand-pulling, which disturbs the gravel and renders constant raking and rolling necessary. One application early in the season, and others as may be needed, while the weeds are small, will keep the walks clean and bright.

In planting an orchard, thoroughly plough and pulverize the whole field and work manure into the soil as for a grain crop. It can hardly be too rich; only avoid putting the manure in contact with the roots of the trees. Set the trees about as deep as they grew in the nursery rows; many die out from too deep setting. Fill all the interstices of the roots with fine soil and tramp it down carefully around them. It is better to mulch heavily than to water frequently in dry weather.

In planting trees this spring heed these suggestions: Plant as early as possible; expose the roots to the air as short a time as possible, and don't plant too deep, work the fine dirt down nicely among the roots and tramp it solid to exclude all air; if fine manure is to be applied, spread it on the dirt after the hole has been half filled, if it is coarse spread it on top, for a mulch; lean the top of the tree strongly toward the one o'clock sun, stake to hold it there, prune the top one-half, and then trust to Providence.