

DIFFICULT PLANTS.

Continued from Page Five.

tiful plants may all become familiar to our gardens through the efforts of gardeners who have refused to be discouraged by their difficulty, just as *Gentiana verna*, which was thought a most difficult plant a generation ago, is now to be seen thriving in many rock gardens.

There are some plants, however, that seem to be altogether capricious. In one garden they will thrive like weeds, in another close by, they will hardly consent to live at all. The best known of these is the *Madonna Lily*. Two other species are the *Gentiana* and *Tropaeolum speciosum*. In some places the *Madonna Lily* will stand any ill usage, but where it suffers from disease or deteriorates quickly, great care should be taken with it. Like most lilies it has roots that persist from year to year and do not die when the stalk withers. If these roots are damaged, the bulb is weakened. It is also at rest only for a very short time, and should be disturbed if at all, only at that time, and then very carefully, so that the roots may not be injured. Again, like most lilies, it is a gross feeder, and often suffers from lack of nourishment. It must have manure close to the bulb, but in poor soils it benefits from a top dressing of well rotted manure put on every year when it is in flower. Again, like many lilies, it dislikes a bare spot, and should be grown among the leafage of herbaceous plants, or close to vigorous roses. It also likes lime in the soil. The *Gentiana*, a very old plant in our gardens, is equally capricious. In some, though given every luxury, it refuses to flower for years. It may be seen both thriving and sulking, in almost every kind of soil and climate. Except where it grows like a weed, it hates to be disturbed and Mr. Farrer remarks that it is useless to attempt to grow it on from small fragments. "You can never hope to enjoy it unless you start its culture straight away with a sound solid mass of it." Also it should be well watered and top-dressed with vegetable soil the first summer after planting. Then, when once it has made some strong growth both of roots and tufts, it may be left alone. As for *Tropaeolum speciosum*, it is the most capricious plant of all, and no one understands it to grow and flower a little in gardens that it does not like, but it is scarcely worth growing at all unless it thrives magnificently. Many are the directions that have been given for its culture, but you may follow all of them and yet fail with it, if it takes a dislike to your part of the country.

Mr. Farrer speaks of *Daphne cneorum* as the most intractable of all plants. If you succeed with it, he says, your success is always a matter of divine chance, and, indeed, of two plants, with nothing to choose between them, and planted side by side, in the same soil, one will thrive and one slowly die. It is not even certain whether in our gardens it likes lime or hates it. If it does not take kindly to your garden, your best chance with it will be to grow it where it will have plenty of room to increase by means of suckers. Let the soil be deep and one half leaf mould, and layer every shoot under a little stone as soon as it is long enough to be layered. If you do this, the shoots will spread into a large and vigorous bush. You can also increase it by means of rooted layers, and if these are potted up for a time, and then planted out without disturbance, they will usually prosper. The plant is worth any amount of trouble, both for its beauty and for its wonderful scent. It likes an open situation, not too hot or dry, and protection from north and east winds. The white *Daphne blagayana*, usually considered more difficult, likes to be almost smothered in stones. No doubt both these plants in their mountain homes are always having stones and soil washed down on them, and have learned to like it.

There are some difficult plants that seem to have got a high reputation only because of their difficulty. Most adventurous gardeners have known the disappointment of discovering, after they have made a difficult plant prosper, that it was not worth the trouble. The best course in that case is to pull it up and have done with it. There is no room in any garden for plants that are not worth growing. However much you may delight in the game of gardening, you should never make it an ugly game.

TO INCREASE THE PRICE OF ORCHARD FRUITS

By W. J. L. Hamilton, S. Salt Spring Island.

Although apple growing in the province of British Columbia is not without profit, orchardists are not by any means realizing all they could, if the disabilities from which they at present suffer were remedied.

There is no system in marketing. It is true there are many co-operative associations to handle their produce, but from their very number, they partly stultify their own ends, for, as each separate association works independently of its neighbors, they are bound to interfere with one another, flooding the market from time to time, thereby cutting prices. They are also hampered by the faulty grading of the fruit, the same brand varying very greatly in quality according to the varying ideas and varying honesty of the individual growers.

Even if the apples are repacked by the association, each local association has its own grading standard, so that the ultimate purchaser does not know. This variation cuts prices and damages the reputation of the fruit grown in the province. Again, a number of small associations not only cost more to run than one large one would, but they are not capitalized sufficiently to be able to afford sufficient storage capacity to hold their fruit for top market prices.

Hence they have to sell the fruit almost as

soon as it comes in, so it is all placed on the market at once, whereby it does not realize anything like its full value.

If, then, an orchardist desires to hold his fruit, he has to go to the expense of building his own place of storage, where the fruit is very seldom kept under best conditions, thereby involving much loss.

Small associations, too, handling comparatively little material, cannot buy their boxes as low as if they were ordering by the million, nor can they make terms with transportation companies, nor with wholesale agents. Another menace to the apple industry is the certainty that, sooner or later, the interests of the co-operative association will clash with those of the wholesale merchants, thus working hand in hand with them, and obviating the otherwise inevitable price-cutting.

These difficulties can be easily overcome if the fruit growers of the province will only pull together, first learn what they want, and then see that they get it. The means I suggest for surmounting all these troubles at once has been frequently ventilated by me, but the vital importance of the issues at stake is a sufficient excuse for reiterating them without apology.

To secure uniform grading throughout the Province, a central school should be established to teach this, and the pupils from this, once they have obtained their diploma for fruit grading and packing, should be sent out as foremen to the different local packing stations to be established throughout the fruit growing sections of the Province.

These local stations need only consist of a shed in which the packers could work sheltered from sun and rain. The fruit, roughly graded in the orchards by the growers, could be placed in convenient sized boxes and conveyed in spring wagons to the packing stations, there to be disposed of.

Or, if the orchards were large enough to warrant it, the gang of packers should proceed to the orchards and do their packing on the spot.

These gangs of packers should be composed of the children of the fruit growers of the neighborhood, who would be paid so much per box, and at the same time receive a training which would leave a permanent mark on the fruit growing industry of the Province. This would also eliminate any possible dishonesty due to the grower boxing his own fruit.

As a check on the foreman, inspectors could be appointed to drop in on the stations, just as school inspectors do, and see that the work was being properly done, and accounts of the output of each orchard properly kept. The apple boxes should each be stamped with an official stamp, showing the district, the grade and name of apple, and the number in the box. Besides this, it should have the packers' number.

Once the fruit is properly boxed it should be sent to a central depot there to be kept in cold storage till the market was favorable. At this point there should be an evaporating plant also, where all apples of No. 3 grade and below should be converted into evaporated apples, so that the No. 3 grade should be withdrawn from the market, where it has no right to exist, and be sold at a price which would be much more remunerative to the grower.

This would also treat the culls, at present usually fed to pigs, and the profit from these at present waste sources would go far to pay the total expenses of working this scheme. Of course, to do all this, it would be necessary to centralize all these scattered co-operative associations under one head, which should regulate all sales, thereby avoiding flooding the market. This central association should also purchase all boxes, treat with transportation companies, appoint agents in the markets of the world, and act for the local associations generally, consolidating their interests and effecting many economies otherwise unattainable.

But this central association is the weak link in the chain, since something of the kind has already been attempted, and has met with disaster.

But who, after all, has the greatest interest in fostering the apple industry, and who will reap the most profit from it? Not the fruit growers but the Provincial Government, for, whereas the fruit growers only get increased price for their fruit, the government obtains increased population, besides building up the good-name of the province as the best fruit growing country on earth. They too could run this system at once more authoritatively and economically than any less powerful fruit growers parliament such as the central association would be, could do.

They also have more capital in hand to establish the cold storage and other costly branches of the system, and could better treat with transportation companies, etc.

Besides they could by this means reduce the expense of fruit and orchard inspection, and could combine under one system the fruitgrowing, dairying, and poultry industries of the province.

All these economies would reduce the working cost and place more money in the growers' pockets, even if, as it should be, the first charge on the cost of the fruit was the cost of placing it on the market. I maintain that the reduction in the cost of boxes, ordered by the million, and the removal of No. 3 grade fruit from the market, with the increased price realized by these, and the culls, at present a dead loss, when sold as evaporated apples would pay the running cost of the whole system and leave a margin over, which, together with the greatly enhanced price of the first placed on the market under the most favorable conditions would nearly double the fruit growers' profit per acre, besides settling up the country, and, by the increased amount of capital and population, develop all the industries of the province.

That the methods above suggested to at-

tain the desired results are sound has been already proved at Hood River, Oregon.

Here, in a small valley, by similar methods, the prices realised have been nearly trebled, and the fruit grown has attained such a high standard as to have a world wide reputation. If this has been done on a small scale with such amazing results, what is to be expected if the whole Province of British Columbia combines to attain these objects? Surely the greatness of the results will be commensurate with the magnitude of the undertaking, and will give us a status unique in the history of pomology.

CONCERNING EGGS.

By Walker & Kerr, Poultrymen, 1017 Burr-dette Avenue, Victoria.

As eggs are now at what are called fancy prices, a few words on this subject may not be amiss. Dissatisfaction is often expressed at the small size of eggs, and when a customer pays 70 cents a dozen for eggs that are only a mouthful no wonder that he or she thinks it is a fancy price. Now it is as easy to improve the size of eggs as it is to improve the size of apples; and any poultryman could soon raise chickens that would lay eggs as large as duck's eggs if it were his interest to do so. But his interest lies exactly in the opposite direction. It takes large birds to lay large eggs and as chickens, like other animals, eat in proportion to their size, when a poultryman who keeps Brahmas, or Orpingtons, finds that his feed bill is double the size of his neighbors who keep Leghorns, whilst he gets no more for his large eggs than his neighbor does for his small eggs, he naturally discards his fowls and goes in for a small breed that eats little, and lays a large number of small eggs. The remedy lies in the altering the system of selling eggs. Why should eggs be sold by number any more than apples or potatoes? The weight of medium sized eggs is two ounces each, eight to the pound, and if eggs were sold by weight customers would be better satisfied, as the weight of the eggs would not matter to them, and the poultryman would be encouraged to improve the breed of his poultry.

FRUIT THINNING

By K. R. Streetfield, Saanich.

In your issue of Sunday, December 12th, you invite correspondence on the subject of fruit thinning. This is a most necessary practice with nearly all varieties of apples, pears and plums, with the exception of a few varieties that are naturally shy bearers. It is advisable to thin to enable the tree to produce fair-sized marketable fruit and also to prevent the formation of a habit of bearing enormously one year and a few specimens the next. Young trees will often bear good specimens without thinning, but as they get older, thinning the fruit is as necessary as pruning, spraying or cultivating if one wishes for fruit to put on the market. I was under the impression that there could be no dispute about this subject. I may add that thinning works in very well with some small fruits as at slack times or on damp days.

When working at all high up the thinned fruit should be thrown over the shoulder away from the tree, because if dropped through the tree it will very likely bruise other fruit.

VASE FORM OF TRAINING FRUIT TREES.

By W. J. L. Hamilton, South Salt Spring.

Throughout British Columbia, fruit trees have in the past, all been trained in pyramid form. Even today I expect severe criticism for advocating any other method. But I have been the victim of this style of training in my own orchard, and I hereby place myself on record as declaring that, unless for fillers, I shall never set out another pyramid trained tree. In future my trees will all be trained to the vase form.

By the terms "pyramid" and "vase training" I do not allude to dwarf trees, but to full sized standards, trained as the French train their dwarfs.

With the pyramid form I find too many apples grown in the shade, and consequently lacking in color. Moreover, such trees are costly to prune and spray, and the cost of gathering the fruit is much heavier than with the vase trained tree, to say nothing of the damage done by ladders, used not only for gathering the ripe fruit, but for pruning and thinning also.

One objection made to the vase method of training is the difficulty of cultivating close to the tree stem, when, as is indispensable for best results, the tree is headed low, branching at about 15 inches from the ground.

But when a pyramid tree is loaded with fruit the branches hang even lower, and are much harder to cultivate under and the objection is obviated any way by the new orchard cultivating implements, which are given side draft sufficient to reach the stem, whilst the team works clear of the branches.

Again, they object that this is an unnatural form for the tree. Is it? I think most apple trees, if left to themselves, will more nearly approach the vase than the pyramid form.

Another objection urged against the vase form is that the winter snows will break it down. So they undoubtedly would if we did not take precautionary measures. To avoid this, whilst they are young we temporarily hold the branches secure by tarred yarn. Once the branches are strong enough we take galvanized screw eyes and insert one into each branch, on the inside, to feet above the ground. Next we take No. 13 galvanized wire and attach a sufficient length of wire to each of these screw eyes. We then attach all the free ends of these wires to a galvanized harness ring, which is thereby held supported

right in the centre of the cup formed by the branches. By this means all the branches support each other, so that no snow can hurt the tree, nor can any wind shake off the fruit.

All pruning, gathering fruit, etc., can be done by running a suitable plank right through the centre of the tree, just above the wires, the outer ends of the plank being supported on stepladders or trestles.

Much could be said about training, etc., but it could not be done justice to in a short article. Another time, I may have something to say on these matters.

FRUIT THINNING.

By W. J. L. Hamilton, South Salt Spring.

I notice a request in your Sunday issue for experiences in fruit thinning. I have practised this for years, and can endorse all the claims for the process that you mention in your article.

Some apples shed so many of their fruit naturally that the work is rendered easy, whilst others, of which Salome is a notable example, hang on to their fruit so persistently that, if not rigorously thinned, very few of the fruit will grow to marketable size. The rule for thinning is so to do it that no two apples will touch one another when fully grown. This gives each apple scope to grow to its full size, and does not overload the tree. Also it insures better colored fruit, as the sun has better access; and the fruit are more even in size, more vigorous in growth and consequently more disease-resisting.

Unthinned apple trees will generally only bear a full crop every second year, simply because the quantity of seed produced (for seed rather than fruit) saps the energy of the tree, so exhausts the tree that it needs a season to rest and recuperate. With properly thinned trees, the weight of apples produced will be greater than if this operation is not performed, owing to the increased size of the fruit, whilst the number of seeds formed will be reduced, by the thinning process, to a point which will not unduly strain the tree's vitality, so a good crop may be expected every year, unless other causes prevent this. Moreover, where two apples touch, spray cannot reach this point; also, the skin being more tender at the point of contact, this is where the chief injury by insects is found, generally affecting both the apples, where they touch, and distortion of the fruit is often caused by pressure. The market at present calls for a red apple, and, on the coast, at any rate, to produce this, every beam of sunshine available must be utilized, since, with the amount of water vapor in suspension in the air, the sun's rays have not the same power they have in the dry belt. Now, fruit thinning prevents the apples shading one another, and, naturally, the bluish caused by the sun has a better chance to develop. This is also one of the many reasons why the vase system of training orchard trees is rapidly coming into favor, and displacing the older pyramid form.

My present trees are trained as pyramids, but never again will I plant one that I cannot train in vase form. All the above applies to other fruits also.

THINNING OF FRUIT.

By James Simpson, Victoria.

This is one of the most important operations in connection with fruit culture, and is beneficial to all fruits, but especially so to pears, plums, and peaches. All first-class growers practice it thoroughly, and find good profit in doing so. The writer once saw 30,000 barrels of Nova Scotian apples sold in Liverpool, the bulk of which averaged \$3 per barrel, but whenever a little extra quality in size was shown, the price ran up to \$4 and often to \$5 per barrel.

If the orchard trees are not allowed to get too high, the operation is a very simple one, and can be done in a few minutes per tree. Not more than two apples should be left on a spur. Where the spurs are very thick, one fruit per spur is quite sufficient.

The operation should be done when the fruit is quite small, as by this means the full strength of the tree goes into what is left; where this thinning is combined with good cultivation, such as pruning, cleaning, manuring and irrigation of soil, the results are almost marvellous. The writer has seen in South Wales, near Cardiff, trees treated thoroughly by the Marquis of Bute's gardener, bearing pears nine inches in length, being the finest for size, quality and crop, he ever saw, beating the famous orchards of Kent, including even the famous Mr. Banyard's, Maidstone, Kent, which the writer had the pleasure of inspecting, and seeing the same variety of pear. There is no doubt whatever of the capacity of Vancouver Island to grow first class apples, and plenty of them, but to do so, growers must do as indicated above. Good people want the best quality of fruit, and are quite willing to pay for it. Some three weeks ago, I told one of our leading ranchers as above, and where I had seen his fruit was neglected in respect of thinning, his answer was that he had not time to go over 1,100 trees. Well, I said, you must find time, or get some one else to do it for you, as it is the only way to make your place pay, as you would get a better market and much better prices, and would never have any trouble in selling. The promised Experimental farm for Vancouver Island should be a great power for good, if it is properly handled by a competent party. All the kinds of fruit trees mentioned should be thinned out same as recommended for apples.

ORCHIDS FOR NORTH EXPOSURES.

The following orchids may be grown in a greenhouse with a northern exposure. In a cool house, one having a temperature of 50 to 60 degrees: *Cattleya citrina*, *Coelogyne cristata*, *Epidendrum vitellinum*, *Lycaste Deppeii*, *Miltonia candida*, *M. Moreliana*, *Odontoglossum crispum*, *O. Inseayi*, *O. maculatum*, *O. pulchellum*, and *O. Rossi*, var. *major*; *Oncidium*

fleuosum, *O. incurvum*, *O. ornithorhynchum*, and *O. tigrinum*; *Sophranitis grandiflora*, and *Vanda Amesiana*. In a temperature of 60 or 70 degrees grow *Aerides* in variety; *Angraecum sesquipedale*, *coelogyne*, such as *C. Dayana*, *massangeana*, *tomentosa*; *cymbidiums* in variety; *Laelia purpurata*, *Miltonia Roezli*; *Oncidium Cavendishianum*, *Carthagenense*, *luridum*, and *splendidum*; *Peristeria elata*, *Pescatorea cerinea*, *Bollea* in variety (this is also known as *Zygopetalum*), *Phajus* in variety, *Phalaenopsis* in variety, *Saccolabium* in variety, *Trichopilia* in variety, *Vanda tricolor*, var. *suavis*, and nearly all *cypripediums* except possibly *insigne*, although it will often grow well in such an exposure.

PROPAGATING EXOCHORDA

The pearl bush (*Exochorda grandiflora*) is increased either by seeds, layers or cutting. Seeds are produced, as a rule, only on an old or unpruned plants. The shrub is valued for its strings of white flowers. To produce these, the plants are pruned in May shortly after flowering and before the seeds are ripe, in order to induce the plants to produce an abundance of young flowering shoots. If seeds cannot be obtained, make layers in June. As a rule, it is difficult to get cuttings to root. Should you prefer this method, you will have the best success if the work is done under glass. Put plants in heat in the greenhouse during the winter several weeks before propagation is to be done. For cuttings, use soft wood and insert them in sand which has a strong bottom heat and cover with a frame or bell glass in order to maintain a close atmosphere. Occasionally, cuttings are grafted on pieces of old wood.

FEEDING ROSES

The best way to feed old established rose plants is by trenching the ground just outside of the old trench lines. The plants will not show the results as quickly as when surface dressings of manure are given or the ground watered with manure water, but the effect is much more lasting. If it is not practical to trench feeding may be accomplished by giving the beds a 4 or 5-inch dressing of well decayed manure and spading it under. Then after a dressing of bone meal. About the middle of May commence watering the bed with liquid manure, giving it once a week. There is only one drawback to this method, it brings the roots of the roses to the surface.

WEALTHY CRANKS

That possession of much of the world's goods is frequently attended by the manifestation of the weirdest eccentricities on part of the owners is amusingly illustrated by the following curious instances:

In Vienna there lives a wealthy man, a Pole of noble origin, occupying sumptuous apartments in the heart of the capital's fashionable quarter, who, when he wishes to summon his servants, does so by means of bugle calls. A favorite pastime of this eccentric is to drive an omnibus, attired like any ordinary driver of such a vehicle, wherever he may find aristocratic equipages to be most numerous.

The Viennese assert that, while he spends a fortune each year upon clothes, yet he is never clad in any save the discarded garments of his valet. On one occasion the Pole astounded the guests at a ball by appearing in a costume of pure white, with the notable exception of shirt and tie, which were entirely black. To complete the oddities, it may be added that when dining, which he invariably accomplishes alone at a table d'hôte, he maintains his reputation for crankiness by reversing the usual order of things and beginning his meal with a demitasse, working backward to the soup.

It was not long ago that there died in an American town a wealthy eccentric, who, though he had never for years been outside the grounds surrounding his residence, was accustomed to boast each day that he had walked to certain towns, generally at a great distance from his house. What he actually did was this: Whenever he decided that it would be an excellent idea to visit a distant town he ascertained its exact distance from his home and covered it on foot on a carefully measured walking track maintained on his premises for this purpose. Should he desire to call on his friends near by, he would do so by proxy, at the same time conducting a conversation with them by means of the servants whom he sent in relays with certain questions, with strict injunctions to bring the answers as speedily as possible.

A well known Parisian according to his own statement, has for many years defied the weather by drinking a solution of camphor, which, in his opinion, is an excellent substitute for clothing. It is said that winter and summer alike finds him sleeping without a particle of clothing, with the windows of his apartments thrown wide open. It has been his custom also to stroll in the garden, even on bitterly cold days, in a garment much resembling that ordinarily worn by normal people only at night.

Among the wealthy eccentrics of this country was a man who lived in a certain town in the south of England. His had excited much attention and amusement among his neighbors. Punctually at noon each day he would appear in his front yard, with a crimson turban on his head, his feet covered with richly embroidered and jewelled sandals, and with a coolie cloth round his waist. Then, absolutely indifferent to the hoots of the people in the street, he would first pray aloud to the sun, "the father of light and good," and immediately afterward prostrate himself before a quaint miniature temple wherein was enshrined a grotesque idol with diamond eyes. What made his eccentricity remarkable was the fact that he was not of Eastern origin, nor had he ever been converted to any religious faith or cult of the East.

TOO RADICAL FOR MINIS

Labor and Socialist Attitude Hereditary Principle barrassing

GERMAN SCARE IS MUCH EM

Warfare of Parties No By Approach of C mas

LONDON, Dec. 20.—How the king's advisors in May may desire to keep his Majesty the present crisis, they find impossible. Many member Labor and Socialist Attitude Hereditary Principle barrassing

It was asked, if they to the powers the Lords possess by the way, was not when government proposed to do, abolish the Lords altogether? George the Third might "If you are limiting the of the crown, why not monarchy?" King George had prophetic wisdom, he looked forward to the reign of his granddaughter, a grandchild and a great-grandchild, the British had become. The crown universally recognized as the most indispensable existence of Europe. That he did not believe it possible or desirable to single chamber in this one thing, it would enter character and the House of Commons, and see the Commons remain.

The speech of the Earl at Belfast on Saturday night, the minister, who declared alarmist. To counter the they are announcing that the three Dreadnoughts in the spring of 1911 in the Observer and 19 in the Mail, declare that Germany's naval increase in naval new ships reached £22,000,000, of which £10,000,000 was new warships against the 1-4, also Germany's great shipbuilding capacity, by the British battleship two new keels to one for purposes. Germany, they he made to pause by the down twelve super-Dreadnoughts, with the 50 million being raised for the purpose. Unionist statesmen are ed with the gravity and at German menace that the mainly instituted a bold programme upon return the only means of presence of power in Europe. King Germany's fresh at France and German dom Europe.

First Election Janu It has finally been decided for the new election on January 8, allow first election on Jan. 8. There will again be sides of oratory this week will speak at Birkenhead and half a dozen million on the platform every night Lloyd-George.

The most novel feature of the campaign of 1910 is the fact that 70 more are already arranged. It is now possible to the parties stand and in the platform, Unconquered will be fewer in number long time past. At the will probably be of the represented by Unionists contests will also be few idle estimates that they would 20. In 30 constituencies and Unionists has fight.

Speaking at Bridgeport, Lord Milner said that the scaremonger, but the won by England was more and more every day demanded the energy of the United Kingdom, but of Imperial unity was the force which all others of significance. What trace of there in the speeches of The Liberals were agreed except predatory, taxative to the Lords.

Mr. Churchill, speaking on, laid stress on the fact, which palliation was in the Development Act, insurance under consider board of trade.

T. J. McNamara, partner of the local government speaking in London, de German scare as ridiculous. The Earl of Cawdor at if home rule were granted what was there to prevent becoming a base for the sentiment, but impartial to regard the outlook certain. The proximity has not slowed down Day and night cities and of the country are seen in political activity. Gramophones are abroad, and soundings are electioneering posters.

Mr. Balfour, a physician to speak at the Consulate at Edinburgh. Lord Charles Bessborough the Unionist candidate, says the two-party has been deserted and gained unless four other the British Empire until the security of supplies and raw matter beyond all question."