

Young Trees vs. Old Trees*

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ONE of the most difficult problems that confronts the fruit grower of the province of Quebec, is that of labor at the time of picking, packing and shipping. What a torment to him when the trees are loaded with ripe fruit and there is no one to pick them?

If, perchance, he discovers a few trained pickers and packers, then on account of their scarcity he is at their mercy in as much as salary and also celerity and perfectness in work are concerned. Hence, in too many cases the sale of the crop *en bloc*. This means a loss to the grower who desperately throws himself directly into the hands of the fruit dealer, as the latter appears to him as a being sent by Providence itself to save the situation, but who too often saves the situation at the expense of the grower and of the development and prosperity of the fruit growing industry.

Encircled between extra high price of labor and the decidedly too low prices offered by the dealer, who buys the fruit *en bloc*, and picks it himself in the grower's orchard, the latter quite often chooses to neglect the orchard, and the fruit industry of the country is by no means pushed forward by such neglectfulness. I know growers, who, for want of decent laborers at decent prices, are compelled to shake and throw down the fruit from the trees and sell it bruised and harmed, as it is, for what they can get on the streets. Having eventually to deal with that scarcity and high price of labor, one must have recourse to some means or methods which will reduce to a minimum the amount of labor required, especially in the fall.

OLD ORCHARDS REQUIRE MUCH LABOR

If one compares the amount of labor an old orchard necessitates, with that required by a younger plantation, he finds out that the comparison as to lighter work is in favor of the junior orchard. Forty-year-old trees have acquired such a height and width that taking the fruit from them is long and sometimes hard or unpleasant work. Some of the fruits are so much out of reach that the pickers are tempted, perhaps compelled, to simply fling them on the ground by shaking the boughs. This fruit will necessarily be harmed, and will bring but a low price.

Even if the fruit is not cast on the soil, it is liable to be damaged by the fingers of the picker who is annoyed by the work he has to perform in the midst of long and numerous branches and boughs. The fruit is seized nervously, sometimes rudely, by the fingers.

squeezed too hard, and then goes to the poor stock and with it on the ground often go the fruit buds, which are the hope of the next crop.

The fruit dealer's men care not for the future of the orchard, as the orchard is not theirs, and when they leave it void of fruit, you oftentimes can behold the soil strewn with fruit buds, broken branches and even boughs violently torn off the trees. Thus mutilated, bruised and weakened, how can the tree win the battle it has to fight every day and every season against insects, parasites, diseases, or the influences of the weather?

It is important, therefore, that the grower should limit the acreage of the contemplated orchard to the sum of

The younger orchard at La Trappe comprises two varieties of apples,—Wealthy and Ben Davis. In one day we picked and packed eighty-seven barrels of No. 1 Wealthy apples, and another day, eighty barrels of Ben Davis, not even using a table to grade the fruit; whilst with the same staff in the old orchard, it is a heavy task to get out thirty barrels a day.

From this, and other facts, I conclude that in this province our aim must not be to secure gigantic trees but simply medium-sized trees, and to care for them so that they will give the maximum of their producing ability before they grow too old, too large, and too tall, and before they give smaller fruits. When they



Perdigrion Plum Trees at the Oka Agricultural Institute

Professor Reynaud, the President-Elect of the Quebec Pomological Society, stands in foreground

competent labor he supposes he will be able to dispose of when the trees have grown tall.

Young trees generally bear larger fruits. The Yellow Transparent apple trees illustrate this fact, at least in the orchard I have charge of. As they grow old, their fruit grows proportionately smaller, and is therefore less saleable. So, I consider that it is not business-like to keep old Yellow Transparent trees. The same may be said of a few other varieties, and although proper fertilizers can remedy the evil, at least to a certain extent, the tendency to give small fruit remains with the old tree.

With young trees not only is the fruit larger, and, in consequence, more fit for the best market, but the picking is easier and costs far less. No long ladders and encumbrances are necessary and the work is swiftly, easily and properly done.

begin to do so, we can have their place taken in the orchard by a younger and stronger generation of fruit trees.

Mr. Craig told us last year that he had seen in Missouri a 2,000-acre peach orchard, and he added that in the same district apple and peach trees lived very few years, thus compelling the proprietor to keep busy renewing the plantation. Sooner or later we shall have to do the same, on account of the scarcity of labor at the time of picking and packing. The same gentleman also told us that at Grimsby, peaches, plums and smaller fruits have now taken the place of apples. It would be interesting to investigate this in order to know whether the difficulty of picking apples from large trees has not had something to do with this change.

USE ORDINARY SIZED VARIETIES

How can one obtain an orchard of only fair-sized trees? There are two

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