

## IN GROWING SMALL FRUITS.

TEN years ago I began to raise small fruit. In the fall I prepared 12 rods of ground—manured it well. In the spring I bought first-class strawberry plants. These were set out 18 inches apart in the rows, the rows being 4 feet apart. To plant my ground it required 600 plants, which cost me \$10. During the summer the ground was hoed and kept free from weeds. By fall the rows were nicely matted. When the ground froze in the fall the rows were covered with basswood sawdust, the coarsest of this was raked between the rows in the spring.

That season brought plenty of nice large berries. After the crop was harvested the vines were mowed and the thickly matted rows were narrowed to a foot in width by cultivating between them. Late in the fall the ground between the rows was again manured.

The following summer again brought forth a fine crop of berries. Not counting what was used in my family, I harvested that year \$50 worth.

I began now to think that with more land it would pay to raise small fruit. I then bought 4 acres of sodded ground. With a jointer on my plow I worked  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre up in good shape, set it, as at first, but using my own runners from plants which had grown their second crop. This was my first mistake, although I hadn't yet discovered it. I cultivated, weeded and covered with sawdust as before. The spring brought every appearance of a good crop. I began to figure: if 12 rods of ground will bring \$50, 40 rods will bring —. But when the crop began to ripen, there were quantities of scrubs not fit for market, and very few fine berries.

The 12 rods, now in its third year, bore a fine crop as before, though not so large. I kept no account of the amount sold that season, but began to try to discover the cause of the failure by reading and from talking with men of experience. I found I had made the mistake in using runners from plants having grown their second crop.

I then prepared  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of ground. As my own plants were now run out, I bought 4,000 plants of different varieties, at a cost of \$50. I had now learned my first lesson. After that I used the first year's runners, taking up all in the rows except the old plants, and the newest runners; these I plow under, as they are too weak to give the best results.

I do not use barnyard manure now on my strawberry ground, because it brings so large a crop of weeds. Now, after harvesting two crops of berries, I plow the vines under, and the last of August or the first of September I sow the ground to rye. The following spring when the rye is up about three feet, I plow it under, roll the ground well and set out to plants.

In the spring I sow it well with unleached ashes, using about 50 bushels to the acre, the same as plaster would be used. This saves much labor in hoeing and weeding and also keeps the ground in good shape.

I have been very successful in always having nice large berries. I have only given my experience with strawberries. Aside from these I set out the balance of my 4 acres to asparagus, currants, gooseberries, raspberries and blackberries. The blackberries I consider the most profitable.

This year from  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an acre, of mostly