

## GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

## Fruit Prospects.

THINNING THE CROP—TENT CATERPILLARS AND THEIR DESTRUCTION—SPRAYING.

It will be of interest to fruit-growers everywhere to learn what are the prospects for crops of various fruits throughout the chief producing area of the country. Below we publish letters from authors in various districts, who touch upon not only the probable crop returns, but indicate as well some measures that are being adopted by the more provident in order to increase the returns. Thinning fruit has not yet been generally practiced, but its advantages where the fruit has set unduly heavy have been sufficiently proven to warrant its adoption. While weight of crop is of importance, the chief consideration should be to secure fruit of first quality, and to this end both the thinning of the overladen trees and the destruction of insects should be carefully looked after. The following letters are worthy of the perusal of every farmer who grows even a small quantity of fruit.

## GUELPH (ONT.) DISTRICT.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

DEAR SIR,—I may say that the prospect for a crop of apples this year is unusually bright. The weather has been favorable for the setting of fruit; and, if spraying is followed up as it should be, we will probably have a repetition of the crop of '96. Pears and cherries are fairly well loaded, but plums are going to be scarce. All of the small fruits, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, strawberries, etc., promise a fine crop. All we need now is occasional showers to bring them up to their best.

With regard to thinning fruits, I believe it would be advisable to watch carefully those trees which are likely to overload, and then thin the small fruit judiciously to avoid over-bearing, which not only gives second-class fruit, but so taxes the vitality of the tree as to make it impossible for it to bear an annual crop. The best time for thinning is as soon as the fruit is set sufficiently to show what the crop is most likely to be, or when the apples are about the size of a hickory nut.

Both the Forest and American Tent Caterpillar have been unusually numerous this spring, and, unless active measures are taken to hold them in check, they will certainly do very serious harm to fruit and forest trees. Thorough spraying with Paris green will more or less keep them in check, but we have found that in addition, it is well to go over the trees and remove the tents. This should be done early in the morning or at some time of day when the caterpillars are not feeding and when they will all be found in the nests.

We believe that spraying will be more generally practiced this year than ever, and we have had numerous applications for information as to spraying mixtures and apparatus.

H. L. HURT.

Ontario Agricultural College.

## BURLINGTON DISTRICT.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—Regarding prospects of fruits in the Burlington District, present indications point thus: Apples good, pears good, plums poor to fair, peaches poor, grapes fair to good, currants fair to good, raspberries fair, strawberries fair, blackberries fair.

For the amateur with only a few trees, thinning the fruit when partly grown would, I think, be desirable and practicable. But where a man has several thousand trees, I am inclined to think that the most economical plan is to thin by pruning—that is, at the annual pruning in the spring—and thus reduce the amount of wood, and therefore the number of fruit buds.

The Tent Caterpillar threatens to be a serious pest here unless effective means are taken to destroy it. The Codling Moth too is on the increase and certainly must be fought. As to remedies for the caterpillar, the one I have practiced for years, and which I believe to be the best one, because sure, is to crush them in their nests by hand. As soon as the tents or webs are large enough to be seen, I send a man through the orchard with a ladder of suitable length for each orchard. In the course of another week or ten days he goes through again, and when very prevalent he goes through again the third time. The first time is the best, as the leaves have not unfolded sufficiently to obstruct the view of the nests, and everything can be seen.

The practice of spraying is, I think, slowly on the increase. It is also, I think, being done more carefully and judiciously than in the past.

Fruit Exp. Station. A. W. PEART.

## CENTRAL ONTARIO.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—I beg to submit the following extracts from my notes of observation in this section. The spring weather opened up about a week later than usual, but since warm weather started in May the weather has been all that could be desired—Italian skies by day and Australian coolness by night, so that farmers got all their crops in with a rush, the land being in fine condition for the seed. The lack of rain has somewhat retarded the sprouting of some varieties, and old meadows will be light; but we had a splendid warm rain all last night, which will undoubtedly improve all kinds of crops. From the 20th till the last of May, our orchards were a perfect forest of glory, as nearly

every apple, pear and cherry was one immense bloom. Plums, however, in most cases had no bloom whatever, so that instead of shipping large quantities as formerly, we will become importers this season in that line. Apples and pears will undoubtedly exceed any former season if present indications count for anything. Small fruits have set well and I believe will be a full crop.

Thinning apples and pears must be attended to if good samples are to be obtained, and the best time, in my opinion, is as soon as possible after the bloom is all off the trees, as this gives a better chance to the remaining fruit; and as none but good samples will pay the orchardist, the thinning should be attended to early. My system is to use a step-ladder, a good pair of straight scissors, and a smart hand. The work is not very difficult. Many of our varieties are such heavy bearers that we cut off five or six and leave one, and even then there are too many left to get the best results. The Tent Caterpillar is evidently on the increase, and the utmost diligence must be observed if we don't want our orchards and plantations to be devastated by their ravages. The Codling Moth and the wormy apple go hand in hand and heart to heart; and who likes a wormy apple? Ugh! The only sure remedy, the safest and the cheapest, is the frequent use of the spray pump and Bordeaux mixture with Paris green, the formula of which everyone who is interested must have read.

I am experimenting with pure arsenic and soda on part of my orchard, as it is cheaper, and I think more effective on all worms, grubs, beetles, etc., than Paris green. More people are spraying this year than formerly, and I think with beneficial results.

R. L. HUGGARD.

Ontario Co., Ont.

## NORTH-EASTERN ONTARIO.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—The prospect for apples, plums, cherries, and grapes is very good, also for currants, raspberries, strawberries, and gooseberries. Heavy crops of these fruits are expected.

It would pay to thin fruit on varieties which bear heavily. Thinning should be done shortly after the fruit sets. Some varieties should be thinned more than others, and it should be left to the judgment of the fruit-grower as to what proportion to remove.

The Tent Caterpillar will not be very troublesome this year in this district, nor is there any other insect injurious to fruit which is very prevalent this season so far. The best remedy for the Tent Caterpillar is Paris green, as recommended in the *Spraying Calendar* issued by the Central Experimental Farm.

I have not noticed that spraying is being more generally practiced this season than heretofore, but should judge it is from the large orders which I believe the pump-makers have had for their machines.

W. T. MACOUN.

Central Exp. Farm, Ottawa. Horticulturist.

## WENTWORTH CO., ONT.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—From present indications, apples will be a very heavy crop; both fruit and leaf are free from fungus, and looking very healthy. Pears, plums, peaches and cherries also promise a full crop. They are also free from fungus, and very little damage has been done by Curculio. The Tent Caterpillar has been more numerous than other years, and the Canker Worm has done considerable damage to the apple orchards near Hamilton.

MURRAY PETTIT.

## LAMBTON CO., ONT.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—The prospects for a large crop of apples are exceedingly good in this district. The freedom from heavy showers which usually fall during the blossoming season allowed a large percentage of blossoms to set fruit. This is particularly noticeable in regard to Greenings, and Baldwins have perhaps set least fruit of any. Pears will be a medium crop, and plums a rather light yield, except in some favored orchards; peaches an entire failure here this season. Small fruits generally promise well; raspberries, which are now just in blossom, present the finest appearance they have done for years, the winter being especially favorable for them; strawberries, which are just beginning to ripen, are finely loaded, but the average in berry-growing districts is scarcely more than 25% of that of last year.

For apple trees which are too heavily laden, if rather bushy, thinning can be most readily performed by summer pruning in the month of June, this is especially beneficial in regard to Ben Davis. This also has a tendency to cause trees to form fruit spurs for next season, so that regular bearing usually follows a moderate performance of such pruning.

We have never noticed the Tent Caterpillar more numerous than this season. In our nine-year-old apple orchard of 250 trees there was scarcely a tree that did not have at least one tent, and many had two and three. A thorough spraying with Bordeaux mixture containing 5 ozs. of Paris green to the barrel, just before the blossoms opened, destroyed every caterpillar in sight, and the trees and fruit are making a remarkably fine and healthy growth. Unsprayed orchards in this district stand a great risk of being defoliated by the Tent Caterpillar. No other method of destroying them is half so speedy or efficacious. We sprayed our 250 apple trees, 100 three-year-old trees

of other fruits, and destroyed every nest of caterpillars in ten hours.

Much more interest is being displayed in regard to spraying this season than ever before; still, few farmers can find the necessary time for doing the work at this particularly busy season. The writer has been offered by many farmers most handsome remuneration to come and spray their trees, but home interests would not permit. There is certainly an opening here for some energetic person in each neighborhood to coin a good many dollars for a few weeks of careful and comprehensive work.

June 6th.

E. F. AUGUSTINE.

## CENTRAL NORTHERN ONTARIO.

There is every prospect at present for a good crop of fruit in this locality. There was a great profusion of bloom on apples, pears and cherries. The weather was fine and warm when the trees were in bloom, and the bees worked hard every day, and as a result the fruit is setting well. Early apples, especially Duchess, will be an immense crop, judging from present appearances. Pears and cherries also give promise of a good crop. Plums in this immediate locality have not done so well. The fruit buds on all except the hardy varieties seem to have been injured by cold in the winter, and have not blossomed well. Currants will be a full crop. Raspberries and blackberries have wintered well, and promise a full crop. Of course these are just beginning to bloom. Strawberries have wintered well, and have had very favorable weather during bloom, have had no injury from frost, and promise a full crop.

With respect to the thinning of fruit that has set too heavily, I cannot speak from experience. No doubt it would greatly improve the quality and market value of the fruit, but I have not practiced it to any large extent. The trouble is to get time to do it, when there is so much work pressing, wages high and help scarce.

The tent caterpillar is plentiful in many localities, and where not attended to will do serious damage. People who spray their orchard properly have no trouble with them. They will make little headway on trees when the leaves are well covered with Bordeaux, even without Paris green. But if the trees are sprayed well just before the blossoms open, with Bordeaux mixture, using instead of the usual formula of 1 oz. Paris green to 10 gals. water, double the quantity (say 8 ozs. to the 40-gal. barrel of mixture), or even more, using plenty of lime and testing the mixture with the ferrocyanide of potassium, the caterpillars will be destroyed. Many people spend more time poking around with a pole and a rag on the end of it, soaked in coal oil, trying to kill caterpillars, than would be required to spray the orchard properly. People are rapidly finding out the value of a thorough spraying of fruit trees, and there is a general desire for information on the subject. There is a great increase in the number of sprayed orchards this year.

G. C. CASTON.

Simcoe Co., Ont.

## SOUTH SIMCOE DISTRICT.

Apples of all varieties have set an enormous load of fruit. Pears, a small crop. Plums bloomed very sparingly. Cherries will be a fair crop. Small fruits promise to be abundant, though the English varieties are mildewing in spite of abundant and continuous applications of Bordeaux mixture. Three acres of strawberries close by are loaded with bloom.

Spraying is practiced here more than ever before. Many orchards last year were entirely stripped of their foliage by the tent caterpillar. These orchards bloomed very sparingly this year. The country seems to be alive with these caterpillars this year. Wild cherry trees by the roadside and neglected orchards are actually swarming. A variety of this caterpillar has attacked the maple trees in some places. I sprayed two apple trees literally covered with tent caterpillars about an inch and a half long with ten ounces of Paris green to a coal-oil barrel of water, in which was put milk of lime. I visited these trees a few days afterwards, and could not see a caterpillar. I am therefore of the opinion that Paris green will kill the tent caterpillar at any age, if the solution or mixture be made strong enough, and lime will preserve the foliage from the effects of Paris green. I have used fourteen ounces on my gooseberry bushes without any bad results. Of course, the quality of the Paris green varies.

STANLEY SPILLET, Experimenter.  
South Simcoe Sub Station.

## What to Do with Cheap Berries.

It is a frequent occurrence with fruit-growers to have the price for berries go below the cost of production during a glut in the market. What to do at such times, and with the Saturdays' pickings becomes a serious problem. Raspberries can be evaporated. Strawberries have been made into jam by J. O'B. Scobey, a successful Washington grower, who told of his results at the winter meeting of the Northwestern Fruit Growers' Ass'n.

He had 12 acres of strawberries in bearing in 1898. His first picking brought \$4 per crate and subsequently dropped as low as 50 cents, so that he stood to lose money on his entire crop. He went to the stores, found 250 pint fruit jars, bought a sack of sugar and on his kitchen stove made 250 pints of strawberry jam. These went onto a closet shelf and stood there forgotten until the following spring. He then sent to San Francisco for some