

Horticulture.

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THE ORCHARD.

Fruit in Nova Scotia.

Being almost surrounded by the ocean, our climate is much more like that of England than yours of western New York. It is warmer in winter, but, alas, cooler in summer—good for the tourists, but bad for the peaches and melons. The thermometer seldom falls to zero in winter, or rises to 90° in summer.—We have little trouble with fruit trees or vines being winter-killed, our difficulty lies in another direction; our average summer temperature is too low to ripen the tender varieties of fruit. The grape vine will grow here finely without winter protection, but I have never known it to ripen its fruit in the open air in this country (Yarmouth.) In some parts of the Province it does better. I think with proper treatment, however, we may be able to induce it to ripen, and we shall want you to tell us how to do it in *The Recorder*.

In the matter of soil, we have little to complain of. There is great variety, from barrens to some of the most fertile intervals in the world. The common soil is a strong loam, well adapted to agricultural purposes. The moist climate and good soil make this an admirable grazing country. An intelligent farmer of this neighborhood estimates that he gets one lb. of butter from every 10 quarts of milk from his herd of cows, and from the milk of his best cows he gets one lb. for every eight quarts. I think this would be considered good even in New York.

Many varieties of apples do very well here. The Red Astrachan, Duchess of Oldenburg, Gravenstein, Robston Pippin, Northern Spy, Nonpareil, Vandevere, Wagener and Tallman Sweet, all do well. The yield is fair and the quality remarkably good. Nova Scotia apples took the first prize at the world's fair in London. There are some local varieties which are excellent in quality and productiveness. The Baldwin does not seem to do well, but perhaps it has not had a fair trial. The horser and codling moth, I believe, are unknown here. Good apples usually bring \$4.00 in the market.

The pear has not been sufficiently tried yet. I have known some specimens of the dwarf pear to do well. The Vicar of Winkfield and Flemish Beauty succeed well here.

Plums and cherries of various kinds will grow and bear, but have not been fairly tried.

The only two varieties of strawberries which have been tried in this place are the Agriculturist and Wilson's Albany. The former failed, the latter succeeded. But it will never become popular—it is too sour. It is not excelled in flavor by the common wild strawberry which is to be had in abundance at from five to eight cents per pound. It is also some days later than the wild ones, but on account of its fine appearance and size it sells at from 15 to 30 cents per quart in this market. But what a caricature on the true strawberry flavor it is. There must be many seedlings among the wild ones, but there appears to be little variety. There is a white kind commonly called the English strawberry which is a fine berry. It always parts from the hull in picking.

Raspberries follow, and are to be had in any quantity from the pastures and clearings, but little notice of them is taken. They are much infested with insects, and I must confess, insects are, in general, pretty good judges of fruit. The flavor is not bad after a person takes the trouble to get at it, but I don't think I should fancy a dish of torpedoes if they were steeped in nectar. Some white ones are occasionally found.

Next comes blackberries and huckleberries. They grow best on rocky, barren land, which has been burned over. Large quantities are gathered by the French Arcadians, and are sold at four or five cents per quart. Some varieties of them are as white as milk.

Blackberries ripen soon after raspberries, and continue till the frost cuts them off late in the fall. There are three or four distinct varieties, some of them much larger and sweeter than others. We never cultivate them, but depend for our supply on the fence corners and new clearings, and edges of the forest. They sell in the market at about five cents per pound.—*Cor. to Recorder, Carlton, N. S.*

Gathering of Ripe Fruit.

Josiah Hoopes, who is good authority on every subject connected with fruit gathering, says:—

"In regard to the gathering of ripe fruits of different kinds, no fruit should be taken from the tree or plant during a damp time, and especially when the dew is plentiful in early morning. Never be so hurried as to find cause for the excuse, I had no time to hand-pick my fruit, and, consequently, was forced to shake them off; for such is very poor policy. Fruit so gathered will almost inevitably decay from the effects of bruises. Each specimen should be taken from the tree one by one, handled as if they were so many eggs. The slightest bruise or even abrasion of the skin is the sure fore-runner of a dark spot, which will eventually change into some form of rot. The spores of seed of fungi are always ready to assist in the work of dissolution, and the slightest scratch gives them a foothold for their destructive work. Scarcely any variety of the largest fruits color or ripen so well if left perfect themselves on the tree, and especially is this true in respect to pears. Summer varieties, as they approach maturity, loosen their hold somewhat on the limb, and by gently raising the fruit they will easily detach themselves at the proper period. This is an excellent test, and may always be relied on. To color up fruit nicely, all that is necessary will be to spread a blanket on the floor of a cool room, and then thinly and evenly place the fruit on the floor. A second blanket must be spread over them, and in a short time the effect of the treat will be apparent in the most golden-colored Bartlets, and rich, ruddy-looking Seckels imaginable. Pears perfected in this manner rarely have the meanness of their naturally ripened companions; nor do they prematurely decay at the core as when left on the tree. Peaches are too frequently gathered before attaining full size, and when this is the case we need not expect full flavor. They must obtain this requisite before gathering; although it is not necessary to delay picking until very mellow. As a general rule, all fruits are gathered too early; and, as high color is not a sign of maturity, many experienced fruit growers are frequently misled. Never pick strawberries because they are red, nor blackberries solely on account of their dark appearance. Each should remain on the plant for some time thereafter. The Albany seedling strawberry changes to a deep crimson hue, and gains continually in size after its first coloring process. It is then soft and excellent eating. And so with blackberries in like manner, many complaining of their extreme tartness when the fault was in gathering imperfect fruit. The Lawton or New Rochelle variety, in particular, is delicious eating, if allowed to remain on the plant until soft, when the slightest touch will sever its hold. Strawberries picked with the calyx (or hull) adhering, will always carry better, and be less liable to decay than if carelessly pulled off without this appendage. The foregoing remarks in relation to the proper time for gathering fruits are equally applicable to the grape. These generally color long before they mature; and thus many a novice in fruit culture frequently forms an unjust opinion of his varieties simply from testing unripe specimens. Grapes should always be severed from the vine with strong scissors or trimming shears, and never twisted or broken off."

"The nice appearance of fruits of all kinds, in their boxes or baskets, in the markets, will always command a better price, than when slovenly 'done up'."

PARIS GREEN FOR VINES.—It is not generally known that Paris Green mixed in the proportion of one part by measure to twenty-five parts of flour, will kill the striped bug from off cucumbers, squashes, musk melons and other vines except water-melons, the leaves of which latter are sometimes spotted if the mixture be used strongly. It may be dusted on from a gauze bag or dredging box. Usually too much of the powder is cast on: the slightest possible quantity evenly distributed is sufficient, and it should be applied in the morning while the dew lies on the plants.—*Western Rural.*

THE FUNCTION OF GUMS IN PLANTS.—From experiments made with pyrogallie acid, Struve concludes that gums perform a function in plants analogous to that of blood in animals. Pyrogallie acid in contact with alkalies oxydizes rapidly, becoming a dark brown color; with other substances, such as gum arabic and blood, the oxydation is slow, a yellow color is produced, and long needle-like crystals form, which are insoluble in water. The least trace of this yellow substance produces an intense blue with ammonia or the other caustic alkalies. The exact composition of this curious substance has not yet been ascertained.—*Prince Edward Island.*

THE FLOWER GARDEN.

Geraniums.

Tricolor and Golden Bionce.

Having tried numerous varieties of Tricolor Geraniums in every conceivable situation, I am forced to the conclusion that for Flower garden decoration in this "Canada of ours," the varieties at present in cultivation are utterly worthless. With me they will neither grow nor retain their leaf-markings. When planted out in the full blaze of the sun, the grand total of a summer's growth will amount to two, or at most, three joints. When bedded in the shade more growth is made, but in either case the glorious coloring of the foliage—which constitute their chief beauty—is entirely absent. I am therefore compelled to discard them altogether for outdoor work at present. I say at present, because I believe we shall yet have—and that ere long—varieties which will make a fair amount of growth, and at the same time fully develop their rich colored variegation under the almost vertical rays of our scorching sun. That this is much to be desired all will readily admit who have witnessed the effect produced in "Old Country" gardens by gorgeous masses of Mrs. Pollock when bedded alone, or in some combination with blue or purple. For effect—either close by, or at a distance—a mass of this (our oldest Tricolor) margined by a broad belt of the old Purple King Verbena appeared to my eye unsurpassed.

It is some consolation, however, to know that as pot-plants, we are able to have them at a time when we can perhaps better appreciate them. From October, when they begin to assume their beautiful tints and delicate pencillings, all through our long and dreary winter until the hot days of June again arrive, we have them in all their glory, challenging our attention, whether we meet them in the fern house window or the princely conservatory. As pot-plants their culture is extremely simple. Thrifty young plants can readily be obtained from any of our nurserymen or florists in the Spring, at a small cost. These should be encouraged to grow as much as possible during the summer months, by repotting them into larger pots, as the ones they occupy get filled with roots, and standing them in a position where they will not receive the direct rays of the sun; those who are fortunate enough to possess a glass structure of any kind, will find it better to let them remain in-doors in some shady corner where there is a good current of air. If it is necessary to place them out of doors, they should be placed on coal ashes, to prevent worms entering the pots, and should heavy rains at any time ensue, it would be advisable to place the pots on their side, as owing to the delicate nature of the roots they are peculiarly susceptible to stagnant moisture, for this reason care should be taken to ensure thorough drainage by placing a few pieces of broken potsherds in the bottom of the pot when potting. It has often struck me that more plants are lost through over-potting, viz.: placing in too large pots—than by all the other ills to which they are subject put together. This applies to all hot plants generally, but with more force to the one now under notice. It would therefore be much safer and better for amateurs to have their plants in pots a size too small than in ones a size too large. Like other Scarlet Geraniums, the Tricolor delights in a light friable soil, but unlike the others, they are greatly benefited by the addition of a quantity of well decomposed manure to the soil; indeed, either this or an occasional watering with weak liquid manure is indispensable to the full development of their rich colors. Keeping the flowers closely pinched off, has also the effect of materially improving the foliage.

In watering, care must be taken to do so rather sparingly. I do not mean by this, a small dribble of water sufficient to moisten the soil about an inch below the surface, (another fruitful source of much mischief) what I do mean is not to water until the soil in the pot is quite dry, and when this is found to be so, give them a soaking of rain water which will saturate every particle of soil thoroughly.

In propagating, those who have a frame with a little bottom heat will have no difficulty in getting soft young shoots to emit roots in the Spring, or well