

SMALL FRUIT GROWING.

our Canadian year, known as August, last, I was completely delighted by a few weeks' visit to some dear friends living in the far-famed fruit regions near Leamington, Co. of Essex, on the north shore of old Lake Erie, about eight miles east of Kingsville. This fine fruit region is known as one of the most favorable spots of Ontario for the most successful growth and production of peaches and strawberries and grapes, etc., and it also possesses those essential qualities in soil and climate for the proper development of the finest blackberries, and that to an extent I never before saw in this country. It may be that similar qualities may be found in other parts of our country, but I am not personally acquainted with them. Before this opportune visit, I never before knew what blackberry growing properly meant, or its products counted for amongst our cultivated fruits. Both the soil and the climate here seemed conjoined to produce the largest sizes and the fullest and highest perfections attainable in the fruit, and these were something far beyond my feeble powers of description to properly convey to you. This soil is a rich mixed gravelly loam, apparently so made by the action of deep overflowing waters during past geologic ages. The climate is that fine quality of pleasant and enjoyable balmy-ness, with a certain admixture of moisture in it that is so characteristic of this whole extent of shore of old Lake Erie. In these fine conditions the finer sorts of cultivated blackberries, planted in large fields of great extent, made a most surprising growth and produced fruit of the most surprising size and rich shining blackness and most delightful genuine blackberry flavors that would defy competition.

The pickers here had what we might most properly call a *snaf*, for the way

they could fill the baskets and crates, it was something quite astonishing. This led me to understand the essential requirements and proper conditions necessary to successful blackberry culture, as so grown and so perfected, they were the very climax of blackberry fruit products.

The growers in that region, after carefully preparing their soil, selected good strong one-year old plants of the variety most desired, and carefully planted them any time in the early spring and kept them well cultivated throughout the season. They plant in long straight rows, 6 feet apart and 3 or 4 feet in the rows; that is 2,610 or 1,815 plants per acre, these making a fine strong growth they cut back the following spring to about 18 inches. This summer the growth is very closely watched and as the young canes are pushing forward, some three or four of them are allowed to grow to the height of about 3 feet and then the lead is pinched out and all other shoots are cut out clean. This causes a vigorous growth on the side shoots, which also may be checked should they become too strong before autumn. The following spring the whole is cut close to about 3 feet and all dead wood is removed, and even the side shoots trimmed in snugly, so as to ease the work of the pickers.

This year there will be a full and beautiful crop, and in this way blackberry growing may be made a very pleasant and paying success in almost any good fruit section. The plantation so put out and so cared for is expected to be good and yield good crops of fine fruit for fully ten years or longer.

After the fruit is all cleanly gathered, the old bearing wood is carefully cut out and removed, to make good room for a strong and rampant growth for