

THINNING FRUIT.

just before the plants are put out the following spring. When thus used, even a larger quantity than above stated can be profitably applied if thoroughly mixed with soil before planting, and if the fall and spring top-dressings are carefully applied, so as not to let too much fertilizer fall directly on the plants, especially

if they are then growing and tender. No possible harm can result if they are in a dormant state. For vineyards and orchards I should apply as top dressing over whole surface, half the fertilizer in late fall and half in early spring.

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THE time has about gone by when the Canadian fruit grower can afford to despise the scientific side of his business, and follow haphazard methods. At one time peaches of all sorts sold at a high price, even without grading, and there seemed little need of spending time and labor in fertilizing the ground or thinning the fruit in order to make sure of fine large samples; but now the conditions are reversed, and small, mean samples of peaches, pears or apples are almost unsalable. Now the haphazard grower, the lazy cultivator, the careless packer, will fail, he will be discouraged, and conclude that fruit growing does not pay, while the grower that spares no effort to produce fine samples, and puts them before the public in an attractive style, will always meet with success.

The thinning of fruit is a practice little observed in Canada, but one that should be adopted without delay. It requires some courage at first to pull off and throw away one-half of the weight of plums or peaches on a tree, but it will pay, and pay well. Indeed it won't pay to neglect it for the half quantity will bring double, if not four times the price, because of increased size.

Last year Prof. Beach, of Geneva, N.Y., made three experiments at the station in thinning apples. The first was to take out the inferior fruit; second, to take

out enough to leave the apples four inches apart; and third, to take out enough to leave the apples six inches apart. After the first experiment he found that the fruit had a better color, and one-tenth of it went into first-class fruit. After the second experiment 22 per cent. of the crop was first-class fruit, and after the third experiment nearly all of the apples were of the first grade.

At the Mass. Expl. Station, experiments have also been made with very distinct results, and we quote from Bulletin 44:—

The past season has emphasized the necessity of reducing the number of specimens of fruit on heavily loaded trees in order to save the strength of the tree and improve the size and quality of the fruit. With the apple crop this necessity is more marked than with any other fruit. Nearly all of our fruit trees possess the characteristic of producing one year so large a crop that they cannot mature a crop the next season, requiring sometimes several years to recover from the exhaustion.

On the station grounds it has been the practice for several years to thin all the kinds of fruit more or less, and we present in this bulletin a few illustrations of the beneficial and profitable results.

No. 1. Two full-sized Gravensteins of uniform vigor and productiveness were selected. One was thinned July