

Practical Pointers from Practical Persons

Picked up and Penned by A. B. Cutting, B.S.A., Special Correspondent of *The Horticulturist*, who is visiting the homes of fruit growers in the Niagara District

THE work of the Dominion fruit inspectors in conjunction with the Fruit Division at Ottawa is highly commended by every progressive person connected with the fruit industry. Our country is so large, and the business of fruit growing is so extensive, it is gratifying to contemplate the amount of good work done in the comparatively short time since the Canadian Fruit Marks Act became law. Although past and present results give us reason to appreciate what has already been done, there is room for more inspectors and for more work in this direction throughout all parts of the Dominion. Among the districts that feel the need of more rigid inspection, particularly in the matter of tender fruits, is the Niagara peninsula. Among dealers and shippers, and all honest growers, there is a general desire for the appointment of a special inspector for that district during the tender fruit season. Such an appointment would not only insure more uniform and honest packing, correct style and size of packages, etc., but it also would be a material boon to the growers themselves. Such a system of rigid inspection would make it easier for the buyer to pay the producer more money for his fruit; for the buyer could then buy almost on a guarantee basis.

WANTED: AN INSPECTOR OF TENDER FRUITS

Mr. E. L. Jennett, of Beamsville, expressed himself on this matter somewhat as follows: "The growers in this district who sell to the dealer are not so particular in the matter of packing as they were when selling on commission. From Jordan west, most of the fruit is sold at the point of shipment, and the principal ambition of the grower seems to be to get it on the hands of the dealer. Under this arrangement, the grower does not seem to care whether the fruit is honestly put up or not. He knows that the dealer hasn't time to inspect every basket of peaches or grapes that he buys on rush days. Then, when the fruit is shipped and turns out wrong, there is no way to trace the original packer or grower. The growers cannot bring their fruit to the shipping house until the last minute, then it has to be rushed off. We have fruit inspectors now, but they cannot be everywhere at once. Yet, what is the good of having inspectors at all if the dealer himself has to do the inspecting? We need a permanent inspector for this district, and one man could cover the whole Niagara peninsula. The inspection should be done at the point of shipment, not at the other end. The dealers themselves would gladly put the inspector wise to any suspicious cases. And the grower would soon see that dishonest methods in packing and packages do not pay. If the growers knew that at any day or hour the inspector is apt to be on the shipping platform there would soon be a marked improvement in these things. The dealers themselves could afford to increase the buying price if they could buy with a feeling of security."

"We need a regular inspector for the Niagara district," said Mr. S. M. Culp, Beamsville, "because it is impossible for dealers to inspect fruit during the rush season. Last season I bought a carload of strawberries and shipped them to the Maritime provinces. They turned out to be mostly trash. They came in to me in a hurry and I had not time to inspect them. I depended on the honesty of the growers and, of course, got all the blame from the consignees in the east. The appointment of a special inspector for this district would do away with cases of this kind. Under existing conditions fraudulent packers get as much money for their fruit as honest ones. The lack of a permanent inspector down here puts a premium

on fraud. We need an inspector, and also, I believe, we should have legislation to compel growers to use a number, or their name, on all open packages—the number, if such is used, to be designated by the buyer. By the use of such numbers dishonestly packed packages could be traced to the man who originally put them up."

STRAWBERRIES

In the Burlington district the strawberry prospects are not very promising. Many plantations have been more or less injured by the exceptional conditions of the past winter. Generally speaking, those patches that were covered with some protective material, such as straw or coarse manure, have come through in good shape; while 60 per cent. of those uncovered are injured. Among varieties, the Williams seems to have suffered most, as it is not as hardy as some others.

Many illustrations of the value of mulching for winter protection are to be found in the locality. "I mulched all my patch but a small corner," said Mr. J. A. Lindley, Burlington, "and the result is that those mulched came through in good condition; the unmulched corner is badly killed and going back every day, and probably will do so until picking time."

A few general pointers on strawberries were given the writer by Mr. Wm. F. W. Fisher, one of the best informed strawberry men in the district. He emphasizes the importance, when harvesting, of keeping the rows picked clean, and also of keeping the picked fruit in the shade as far as possible. He said also that it is best never to put more than one variety in the same crate. Two or more kinds in a crate hurt the appearance of the package when placed on the market. For the sake of appearance, also, the top layer of berries may be placed with the hulls or calyx end down, but in a rush this cannot always be done; still, when it is done and done honestly—not "topping off" with large berries—the basket will often bring two cents more than those in which the berries are thrown in a haphazard fashion.

The writer has observed, and Mr. Fisher agrees with him, that those varieties of strawberries that are the most acid or tart in flavor are usually the best shippers and longest keepers. For example, Williams, Lovett, and Leader possess a degree of acidity beyond most others, and it is well known that they are among the best, if not the best, for shipping purposes. Others again, particularly early varieties, like Michel's, that are sweet, but not acid, seldom are good keepers and shippers. We call attention to this point as it may be of value, one way or another, in the selection of shipping varieties and in the manner of marketing varieties already on hand.

CULTIVATING LOW-HEADED TREES

The advantages of maintaining low-headed trees in a peach orchard have already been mentioned many times in the columns of *THE HORTICULTURIST*, yet there are many growers who object to this practice on the ground of extra labor at the time of cultivating. Mr. Willis T. Mann, Barker, N.Y., in the course of an address in the Niagara district this spring, pointed out a simple method of overcoming this difficulty. His plan in low-headed orchards is to plow in spring as close to the trees as possible, and then use an ordinary low spring tooth harrow to level this down and to loosen up the soil near the trees that cannot be reached with the plow. A harrow must be used that has two sections, and these sections should be extended or separated by means of a wide "evener" or "spreader" fastened between them.

The width of the spreader will depend upon the distance between the plowed area and the trunks of the trees. On very light soils a smoothing harrow may be used instead, if adjusted in a similar manner.

QUINCE TREES REQUIRE ATTENTION

Success with quinces is not so general as with most other fruits. Some of the best to be found in our markets are grown by Mr. C. C. Pettit, Fruitland. These are from trees planted on a black clay loam incumbent upon a heavy clay subsoil. The trees are well cultivated, sprayed and pruned. The pruning consists of regularly thinning out the branches with sufficient heading back to correct growth. The two leading varieties are grown, viz., Orange and Champion. The former is the larger, but it is more apt to crack and break open than Champion.

THE PEAR PSYLLA.

"The pear psylla is as bad a pest on pears, particularly on Bartlett's, as the San Jose Scale is on peaches. It is very difficult to combat. Growers should be on the watch for it as it is becoming more prevalent every year," said Mr. Jos. Tweddle, of Fruitland. He recommends for treatment the lime and sulphur wash, applied thoroughly in early spring. For best results the trees should be sprayed four times, going east and west and spraying both sides; then north and south both sides.

GOVERNMENT INSPECTION

Mr. W. E. Biggar, San Jose Scale inspector for township of Saltfleet, Ontario, told the writer that he finds his territory almost free from scale as compared with the situation three or four years ago. The growers have learned that the scale can be controlled by the lime and sulphur wash, and are taking advantage of that fact. Orchards known to be infected are watched and neighboring orchards are protected. "I know of a particular orchard," said Mr. Biggar, "an orchard of 100 acres that three years ago was badly infected in parts with scale. The owner being determined to stamp it out, used the lime and sulphur wash with persistence and thoroughness, and now you would need more than an ordinary microscope to find a live scale in the orchard." Mr. Biggar said also that black knot was practically wiped out of the township, but fears the spread of "little peach," a new disease in this country, which has recently made its appearance, and which is akin in character to peach rosette.

SPRAYING MIXTURE

Mr. Thos Beattie, San Jose Scale inspector for city of St. Catharines, has used all mixtures yet recommended and finds Carlson's mixture to be more practical and more satisfactory than any other. "It is the only treatment for scale that I can honestly recommend. It is the easiest and cleanest to apply, the easiest on harness and machine, and it is the cheapest in the long run. I can cover as many trees with one barrel of Carlson's as with three barrels of lime and sulphur. It is the best for city lots as it does not destroy paint nor discolor buildings like lime and sulphur." In St. Catharines the scale is very prevalent in all grounds where no treatment has been applied. I have found it on all kinds of fruit trees except apricot and sour cherries. Also on mountain ash, on Japan quince, on thorns of all kinds, on privet and very bad on lilacs."

SPRAY AT THE RIGHT TIME.

"Spraying pays," said Mr. Gabriel Overholt, of Jordan, "but one spraying at the right time is worth half a dozen at the wrong time." This