

Strawberries and Cream

The Prairie Provinces are well suited to strawberry culture, and with intelligent management it has been made a highly profitable business

Strawberries and cream! The big, red, juicy, luscious berries and the sweet, rich cream!! Oh glory!!!

Everybody likes this delicious dish, and no one can appreciate the luxury better than the farmer's family sitting down to supper with an appetite sharpened by a day spent in the pure exhilarating air of the prairie. The strawberry is a rare luxury in the farmer's home, but it need not be, for the Western soil and climate are both suitable for the production of this fruit, and there is no reason why strawberry culture should not be a large and profitable industry in Western Canada.

Strawberries have been grown very extensively and easily at Bowsman River, Man., for the last ten years. Ten years ago the late Mr. J. H. Monsees thought that strawberries could be grown successfully in this northern country, so determined to give them a trial. He therefore sent to the States and purchased some plants which did fine. He then raised a berry of his own for a fertilizer, which he named Lucinda, after his wife. He then went into the strawberry business more extensively, but owing to poor health gave it up, and with his wife went to British Columbia, where he died shortly after. He had two farms while here and grew strawberries on each. The one place, with quite a number of plants on, he sold to his son-in-law, who still raises berries successfully. The other place with about five acres planted he sold to some lumbermen and general merchants. But as some poor years then followed for strawberries, the latter went out of them and plowed theirs under. But that was not going to be the end of strawberry growing for Bowsman River, for Mr. Royce, who had worked in the strawberry business with the late Mr. Monsees, determined he would try them. He then got some plants and not having a farm of his own, started them on the one belonging to his mother-in-law, but finding the situation better on Mr. Richard Metcalfe's farm, he put in on it, his mother-in-law taking those on her place. Land that has had potatoes on formerly is preferable for strawberry growing. Mr. Royce started planting in the latter part of May, 1910, the plants being put three feet apart in rows of four feet apart, every third row being a fertilizer. Dunlaps are good for this. It is preferable to put them in after a

rain when the earth is moist.

When you have the plants first set out in the spring keep your cultivator at work every time the weeds appear until the first of August, when you will have to stop to give the runners time to set. If you have the patch fairly clean then it is all the cultivating that patch will need.

They do not bear any fruit the first season, as it takes the first summer for them to take root and grow, and for the runners to get a good start. There has to be considerable rain in the autumns so that the runners will take root and will therefore be pretty well guarded against winter killing. If the runners take root and do not get winter killed, the second summer you will reap the fruit, and if all goes well there will be a greater abundance the third summer than the second. There are very few strawberry

Strawberry Field on Mr. Richard Metcalfe's Farm.

growers who keep the patch over for a fourth year, as the berries are very scanty and small and the best thing to do is to plow them under. To have strawberries every year it is therefore necessary to put a new patch in every year, as was done by Mr. Royce on Mr. Metcalfe's farm, putting in one acre in the spring of 1911.

It is not necessary in this northern country to mulch them, as there is a great deal of snow in Swan River valley and no strong winds prevail, so that the snow lies just as it falls and nature's blanket is quite enough to keep them from being frost-bitten. From the two acre plot put in in 1910, 150 crates were picked this summer and sold for over \$500. In the picture at the top of this page you will see the patch itself and the pickers at work. Picking commenced on the morning of July 3, as soon as the dew had

gone off, and was continued every other day until July 27, that being the last picking day. A few boxes were picked before July 3 and a few stragglers were picked after July 27. In the other picture you see the pickers taken just as they came in from the patch from their day's work. There were from a dozen to twenty pickers there each day, and they were paid two cents for each quart they picked. If the berries are good a good picker can gather one hundred quarts a day. The highest that was picked by anyone this year was sixty-eight quarts, but the berries were not as good this year as they will be if all goes well next season. After the berries are picked they are carried into a shack built for the purpose where they are cleaned and prepared for shipment in crates made from Ontario maple wood. The wood is bought in the desired sizes and made into crates when needed. The pickers' stands are also made. They hold eight boxes and each box contains one quart. These boxes are all bought ready for use.

Orders come for the fruit from almost all parts of Manitoba. Quite a few were shipped to Winnipeg and to Red Deer, Alta. Some were also sent to the Dominion Exposition at Regina. The crates when made hold twenty-five boxes and when the fruit first comes on the market it sells for \$4 per crate. Mr. Metcalfe thinks strawberries are all right and with considerable rain this fall, lots of snow this winter and the acre extra put in in the spring of 1911, he expects a bumper crop next year.

A plant that causes laughter grows in Arabia, and produces flowers of a bright yellow, with seeds that resemble small black beans. The natives dry and pulverize them, and the powder, taken in small doses, makes the soberest person behave like a circus clown or a madman, for he will dance, sing, and laugh most boisterously, and cut the most fantastic capers and be in an uproariously ridiculous condition for about an hour. When the excitement ceases the exhausted exhibitor of these antics falls asleep, and when he awakes he has not the slightest remembrance of his frisky doings.

A German scientist says that married men live longer than bachelors, and are less likely to become insane. Another argument for matrimony is found in the fact that there are thirty-eight criminals among every 1,000 bachelors, while among married men the ratio is only eighteen per 1,000.

If thou thinkest twice before thou speakest once, thou wilt speak twice the better for it.—Wm. Penn.



The Berry Pickers