

STRAY NOTES.

Covering Strawberries—Keeping Pigs—Overproduce, etc.



ANY start out with great zeal to cultivate strawberries, but fail to count the cost, *i.e.*, the patience, attention, and exercise of judgment needed, as well as the art of "knowing how," and in two or three years give it up as a bad job. It certainly requires the above-named qualities to insure success, and the winter protection is an item that cannot be slighted without loss. I have tried all sorts of material for covering, and at different times, and have settled down to the practice of using clear oat straw when I can get it, and covering *early*, before any hard frosts, putting on just enough to prevent the thawing and freezing weather to affect the ground and cause heaving. Before this spring I was in the habit of uncovering before Jack Frost had taken his final departure, but I left it on three weeks later this spring, and now at picking time, reap the reward. The foliage and berries are ranker and finer growth, having met with no chilling check from the frost. Care should be taken before the snow comes, to cover any spots where the snow has blown off, as the neglect will become apparent when the foliage begins to grow. Oat straw is a light, buoyant covering, not likely to pack and lie too heavy on the plants.

Does it pay for gardeners to keep pigs? A neighbor, John Smedly, living in Nepean, three and a half miles from Ottawa, says, from his experience, that it *does* pay. Last season he kept ten in a yard of about an eighth of an acre, all summer and fall, into which he had deposited over a hundred loads of manure. The pigs kept it well mixed by rooting and added to its value their own droppings, making it worth double what it would have been had it lain dormant all the season. After counting the cost of keeping, and what he paid for the pigs, he realized a fair margin, besides the improvement of his manure. The experiment is worthy of imitation by any who fancy keeping pigs.

Are we likely to have an overproduction of fruit this year, as to seriously affect the profits of fruit growing, is a question one is inclined to ask just now. Everybody is taking a hand at fruit growing; many are starting out in the work of tilling the soil that have got tired of other occupations, many are driven to the country by the hard times in the cities and towns, thus increasing the number of producers and lessening that of consumers, and that to the extent as to throw things somewhat out of balance to insure a healthy state of things. In a time of general depression, as at present, all lines of industry suffer more or less, and it would be a wonder if fruit growing and gardening in general did not feel the stagnant stream of the times, and prove less lucrative than in ordinary seasons of prosperity. No doubt many who have gone into gardening with little or