

During the strawberry season there are many dealers from other cities whose business is to ship to their home customers, and I have frequently heard these men say that "although there are so many berries in market, we cannot procure enough desirable stock to fill our orders." The self-evident remedy is to plant less acres, to devote more care to securing fruit of a better quality, and cease shipping premature and unripe fruit to market. Producers should remember that the taste of consumers is becoming cultivated and now the demand is for the best fruits. Each year it is more difficult for dealers to dispose of the immense quantities of inferior grades. To become a successful cultivator one needs brains, energy, capital and a large amount of patience and perseverance, in order to overcome the many obstacles to be met with in his business. Having succeeded in learning how to produce good fruit, the next item is to learn how to market it. One important feature is the selection of proper packages for each variety; for frequently the form of a package is objectionable to the purchasers, and one who aims at success in fruit culture must meet the wants of purchasers. Of late years the gift packages have become so popular that many refuse to buy fruit in packages on which a deposit is required. Choice fruits sell better in small gift packages than in larger ones. Some growers ship their poor fruit in these small packages, thinking that if the size of the package effects the price secured for good fruit it will also help the price of the poor stuff; but that is a mistake. Another important item is to establish a reputation for giving honest weight and measure; and to secure this reputation, the grower must give the packing of the fruit his personal attention, for some employees think it folly to be so particular, and imagine they know how to do it as well as the employer, and do not hesitate to deceive the purchaser, thinking that their employer will not find it out. The result is that the brand is ruined without the knowledge of the owner. Possibly the owner may wonder why his fruit does not sell for its accustomed price, and the receiver, supposing that the owner is aware of the change in packing, says nothing when reporting the sales. Again, the grower is apt to overlook the placing of the fruit wagon in charge of a trusty driver in transit to the station. A careless person can do much harm by driving over rough places without any regard to the tender character of the fruit. I would suggest to the shippers of tender fruit that they follow their drivers occasionally to the station and examine the fruit before it leaves for market. I know from personal experience that a large amount is injured in this way and the loss attributed to transportation companies.

Let the shipper raise the covers of his berry crates and he will soon learn why dealers complain of the poor condition in which the fruit arrives. In some instances he will see berry baskets resting at an angle of 45 degrees, with one-third of the fruit gone, or he may see all of the fruit in the top tier of baskets so bruised by jolting as to be worthless. It would be wiser for