

❖ Question Drawer. ❖

Windbreaks.

971. SIR,—I intend planting a hedge on the West and North side of a young orchard. What kind would you advise me to plant? Some say the borers work in the Spruce and Pine; would they also trouble the apple orchard? Would you recommend the Balsam Fir?

J. A. T. ISLINGTON.

A great many kinds of trees, both deciduous and evergreen, have been utilized to good advantage as windbreaks, but of the evergreens, there is none known in Southern Ontario so satisfactory as the Norway Spruce. It grows very rapidly, bears cutting well, thickens up closely, and is withal so graceful in form, that it surpasses every other. In 25 or 30 years the tree will attain a height of 30 or 40 feet, and its lower branches will spread out for a distance of at least ten feet, in every direction.

The Balsam Fir is not nearly so suitable, being inclined to thin out around the bottom, while the Norway Spruce always remains close and thick. We have seen the Scotch Pine used for the same purpose, but it is rather inclined to irregular habit, and is, withal, a slow grower.

When visiting the Fonthill Nurseries last summer, we were shown some fine samples of windbreaks, well grown up, and of quite a variety. One was a double row of Larch and American Arbor Vitæ; another of Larch and Austrian Pine mixed; another a single row of Arbor Vitæ, but the finest of all we saw there was a fine hedge of the European Larch, well grown up to be a most excellent windbreak, and an object of beauty as well. This tree is a rapid grower, and in time becomes valuable for timber.

❖ Open Letters. ❖

Pear Blight.

DEAR SIR,—As frequent enquiries are made for the cause of the pear blight that played such havoc with our pear orchards last year, and as no one seems to give a satisfactory answer, permit me to offer a suggestion. It is quite clear to my mind that the severity of the attack in 1896 was indirectly due to the severe frost of May, 1895. This frost did much damage to many pear trees as well as other varieties of fruits, and set them back at least a month, in some cases six weeks. When the following winter set in these trees had not fully matured and hardened their timber; that is, the partitions of the minute cells of which a tree is composed, were tender, and not sufficiently hardened to resist the attacks of "Jack Frost." The cells having yielded or burst the sap could not follow its natural channels. The result was disease and in too many cases, death of the tree. This is

my theory, but I do not claim to have absolute proof of the same, but experience has taught me that trees whose timber has been fully matured are much less subject to blight and other disease than those whose timber has not become properly hardened.

THOS. HAMMOND.

Aylmer, Ont.

The Magoon 'Strawberry.

DEAR SIR,—Among our variety tests of new strawberries, the Magoon ranks the best; it is quite easy to see that it is a different type from the usual run of strawberries, as the foliage has a beautiful crinkled appearance. This berry is an Oregon seedling; it surpasses the sharpless in rank, luxuriant growth; the fruit is of gigantic size, and what is more, the flavor is equal to that of the finest wild strawberry; the color is a clear cherry red,