

GOOSEBERRIES.

Large quantities of London manure is also brought down the river in barges, and after partial decay is applied during the winter months before the plantation is dug over, but there is no manure so good as that from a cowyard when it can be got. The plantations should be kept perfectly clean by hoeing and hand-weeding if required, and the ground should always be dug roughly in the winter after the bushes are pruned.

Varieties.—Whitesmith for gathering green, Crown Bob either green or red, Warrington for late red fruit. A new variety called Early Kent has lately been very highly spoken of for its earliness, which is a great consideration in gooseberries for market.

Gathering and Marketing.—Gooseberries, if *early*, pay well for gathering and sending to market green, and for this purpose Whitesmith is the best among the older varieties for early work. But Early Kent is said to be much earlier. The early sorts should be planted in the warmest part of the ground, in order to get the full advantage of the early prices, and all of the "White" Gooseberries should be gathered in a green state for market, as they do not sell well when ripe. Some of the Crown Bobs may also be gathered green, or all of them if prices are good. Warrington generally pays best when ripe. I say *ripe*, but ripe gooseberries for market must only just be red. If allowed to get quite soft they are apt to split in damp or showery weather, and there is thus a risk of great loss, which is avoided by gathering earlier. Also they will not stand handling at the market if over-ripe; neither will they travel so well; but if required for sale near home, the wishes of the buyer must be considered. Green gooseberries should realize from 2s. to 3s. per stone at the market, ripe fruit 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. An acre planted

5 feet apart each way should yield the first year about 40 stones of green fruit, or 60 stones when ripe, worth £4 to £5 clear of expenses, and this will increase yearly as the trees grow (if the crop is not spoiled by frost), until at six or seven years after planting they should have reached a full size, and give a crop of 5 tons per acre, worth £50 at a low estimate clear of expenses. It is possible to have double this amount occasionally by high cultivation and getting the best prices in the market. As gooseberries may be grown among standard apples and other fruits, they will add considerably to the returns, although it is not possible to grow such large crops of under fruit in mixed plantations. They should be packed for market in half sieves containing 2 stones, or 28 lbs. nett, and finished off as advised for black currants.

Enemies.—Birds are very troublesome to the gooseberry grower, both when the fruit gets ripe (at which time they must be scared off by shooting), and also by eating the buds off when the trees are in a dormant state. It is at this stage when most mischief is done, as every bud eaten then means the loss of two or three gooseberries. Strings of white cotton crossed in various ways over the trees by twisting them round four of the most prominent branches is one of the best methods of frightening them away. When damage from this cause is expected the trees should be pruned, and cotton put on them before January, as pruning is not easily done after the cotton is on. Bullfinches and sparrows are the most destructive among the buds. All of the former should be destroyed, as they do no good to the fruit grower to counterbalance the mischief. Sparrows do some amount of good in summer by devouring caterpillars, and must not all be destroyed, or the remedy may