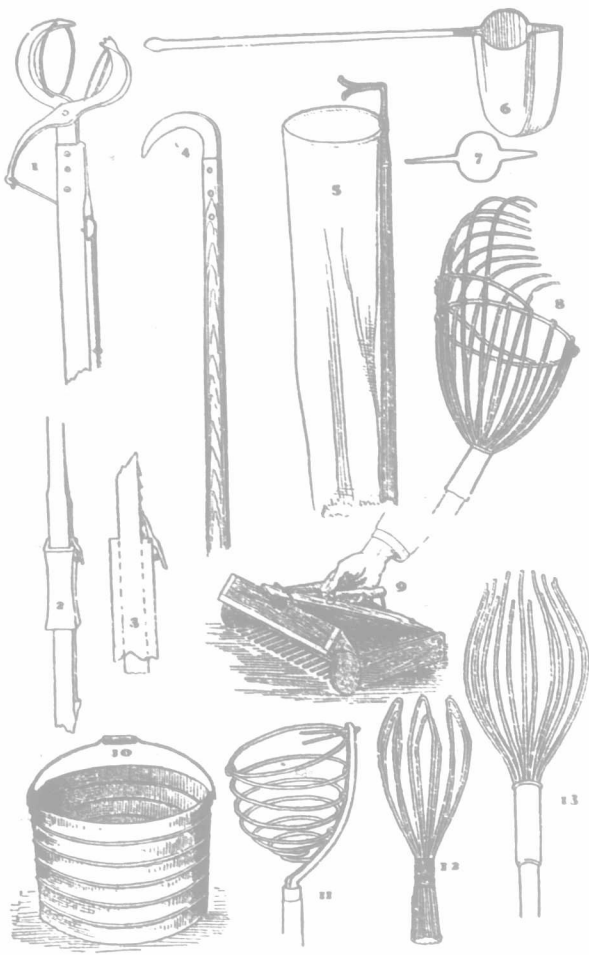




FRUIT-PICKING CONTRIVANCES.

Picking, Packing and Marketing of Tree Fruits.

The harvesting of the early apple and peach crop is already well under way, and a few suggestions as to the proper methods of handling these larger fruits may not be amiss at this season. The first point is to pick the fruit at the proper time.

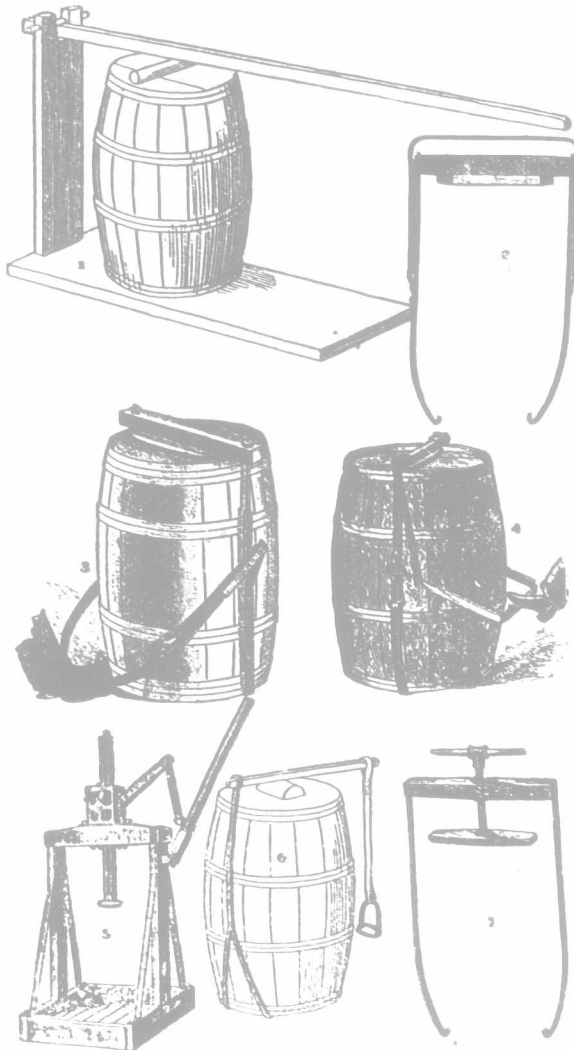
Plums intended for shipment may be picked as soon as well colored and before showing any tendency to soften. The Japanese varieties may, as a rule, be harvested earlier than the other kinds. It is advisable to pick this fruit directly into the baskets in which it is to be shipped, at a time when the fruit is quite dry; pick by the stem so as to disturb the bloom as little as possible. Pears, specially those for export, also require harvesting when still quite green. A variety such as Clapp's Favorite, if left on the tree till soft, will be found to have rotted at the core, while if picked as soon as it has attained full size, and ripened in a cool, dark place indoors, the same fruit will be more delicious and juicy, and yet firm throughout. The usual advice given by prominent fruit-growers is to pick when on turning the pear upward its stem parts readily from the branch to which it is attached.

Peaches should be full-grown, and of good color. They require more careful handling than the pear, and do not stand long distance shipments as ordinarily packed. Apples for export are picked when full size and partly colored, while the early apples, or, in fact, all that are to be placed directly upon the home market, are allowed to attain full color and attractiveness. This latter point applies to all fruits to the extent that such as are to be disposed of at once in a near market should be allowed to remain on the trees until they are at their best in both flavor and color. In picking, remember that bruising the fruit spoils its keeping qualities; exposure to the sun hastens its ripening, while cooling soon after gathering tends to retard ripening.

For the operations in the orchard many special appliances have been devised. A swing-handled basket, lined with carpet or other soft thick material, will be a great convenience to the apple picker. Many growers use for this purpose a grain sack provided with a hoop or triangle to keep the top open, and a strap to support the bag from the shoulder. Ordinary, strong, light stepladders are the best for general use. Another necessity in an orchard of any size is a low, broad-tired wagon, with wide projecting platform, and a front truck which will allow the wagon being turned in its own length. For packing in the field, portable sorting tables can be easily made, a convenient size being three feet in width, from six to twelve feet in length, with six-inch sides. The bottom is formed of half-round slats, one by two inches, and one inch apart, with an apron at the lower end to prevent bruising of the apples as they pass into the barrel. Most of the sorting, however, is now done in

special packing houses, to which the fruit is hauled as soon as picked. Any cool, light shed, or portion of the barn, may be utilized to advantage for this purpose.

In the packing house, the fruit is graded into two good grades and the culls; some careful shippers make even four grades. This process of grading is absolutely necessary to success. A buyer, seeing an ill-assorted lot of fruit, naturally pays a price corresponding to the smallest specimens in the package; while if the fruit is uniform in size and well packed, the package is pleasing to the eye, and commands a fancy price. All the work should be done by hand. With peaches, pears and fancy dessert apples for home markets, each layer is placed in the baskets separately, the top being faced with the fruit all one way, generally with the cheek up. For export the best shippers are now using compartment cases for extra fine apples and pears, often wrapping each fruit in waxed paper, with brown paper outside. Others simply use the cases without partitions or wrapping. However, the barrel is still the standard package for the foreign market. The apples are faced for two or three layers, top and bottom, with stems out, the center being filled in fruit of the same grade, and carefully shaken down as each basket is added. With the softer varieties, the barrel is filled about an inch too full, and pressed down that much when headed up. This prevents the fruit becoming slack or loose in the barrel during



APPLE-BARREL PRESSES.

the long voyage across the ocean. The firmer kinds of apples do not require quite so much of this pressure as do the softer kinds.

Use only the neatest of packages and the biggest of your fruit for fancy prices. At all times, send out only the best, and put your own brand on every piece. Keep in close touch with the commission men, and ship only as they advise. Be honest in all your methods. Your name will soon create a demand for your product, for it has been well said, "fruit well grown and well packed is one's best business card."

Wellington Co., Ont. P. W. HODGETTS.

Conditions of Fruit Trade.

Mr. Alex. McNeill, Dominion Fruit Inspector, has just returned from inspecting the fruit districts in Western Ontario. There is an enormous crop of peaches, but there will be very few exported, owing to the fact that the cold storage facilities are not just what they should be. To put the matter in a nutshell, there is a deadlock in the fruit industry. The steamship companies do not care to fit up their steamers when they are not sure of getting the fruit to carry, and on the other hand the growers are backward about planting trees and waiting seven or eight years for them to bear, and at the end of that time not to have any assurance that they will be provided with suitable cold storage facilities.

Mr. E. D. Smith, of Winona, is shipping three car-loads of early apples to Manchester.

APIARY.

Fall Feeding.

By the time the honey harvest closes, all the colonies ought to be strong in numbers, and in favorable seasons their aggregate resources should be such that when an equal division is made there will be enough food for all. If some have more than others less than they need, an equitable division may usually be effected in movable frame hives. Such an agrarian procedure would soon overthrow human society; but bees thus helped will not spend the next season in idleness; nor will those deprived of their surplus limit their gatherings to a bare competency. Before the heavy frosts all feeding required for wintering bees should be carefully attended to. It is also desirable that this work, when once begun, proceed as rapidly as possible, as the bees are so excited by it that they consume more food than they otherwise would.

THE HONEY-BEE.

The Honey Crop.

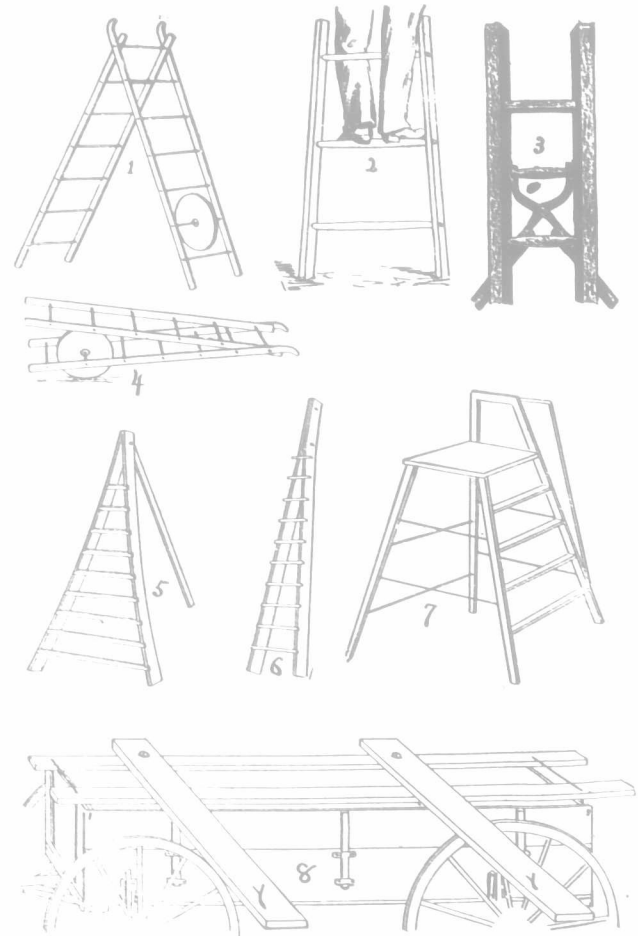
A good deal of speculation is being indulged in by beekeepers and commission men in the United States concerning the extent of this year's honey crop. From the general trend of the estimates which are being made, it would appear that a light crop is to be harvested, but not so much below the average as is anticipated in Canada. The weather in many parts of the States was more favorable for gathering honey than in this country, and as a result our apiarist cousins will probably have more honey to sell than we. Should this be the case, however, the supply on this side the line is pretty sure to set the price in its own market, as the duty on American honey or any substitute thereof is at present 3 cents per pound.

Don't Store Honey in the Cellar.

This is the advice given by the Rocky Mountain Bee Journal, in a recent issue. Good as that counsel may be in one of the driest States in the Union, it is still more true in Canada, where cellar walls are usually damp. Not that beekeepers are likely to make any mistake in this matter, but the average consumer is nearly sure to think the cellar a desirable storehouse for any which is kept in stock and in this way its flavor is almost certain to become impaired.

Sweet Clover.

The Globe, of Toronto, and a number of local newspapers have organized a crusade against sweet clover or melilot, the familiar and fragrant roadside plant. While, in a sense, it is a weed, it can hardly be designated a very dangerous one. Besides this, though not equal to white clover, it is prized by apiarists as a honey producer and they are not likely to take kindly to any attempt at its extermination.



ORCHARD LADDERS.