

During the first week in February:—

Early River Peaches: count 24, 4s. 6d.; 15, 5s. 6d. per box.

During the third week in April:—

Peaches: count, 32, 2s. 6d.; 28, 3s. 9d.; 20, 5s. 3d.; 15, 8s.

It costs the same to ship the large as the small fruit. Reckoning that it costs 2s. to ship a box of peaches, we will take the result of the sale during the third week in April last, the prices for that week happen to have been low, as there were over 6,500 boxes of peaches on the market, deducting 2s. per box from each count to show what the shipper got for his fruit, for 28 larger size 1s. 9d., for 20 large grade 3s. 3d., and for 15 very large peaches he got 6s., after deducting the cost of export. I am pointing this out to growers to impress upon them the necessity of growing more fruit of the large grades. I leave it to them to determine how to do it; but they must understand that it is quality, not quantity, that is wanted on the London market.

'Quantities and Prices.'

This season there were 23,646 boxes of peaches exported, against 17,298 for 1909: this is also a reasonable increase, and I do not think the total quantity affected the prices. During the height of the export season, however, when over 6,500 boxes were landed in the course of one week, it was found very difficult to prevent a serious fall in the prices. The peaches, on the whole, did not arrive in a satisfactory condition. The transportation of this fruit to the oversea markets offers one of the most difficult problems to those connected with the trade. The Cape peaches usually arrive in London in a sound condition in so far as their appearance goes, but when tasted they are found to be dry, woolly and lacking in flavour.

The prices during the past season may be considered satisfactory.

During the last week of January, Early Rivers, in counts of 28 and 24, were making 4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d., and Alexanders 5s. to 8s.; during February different varieties of good attractive peaches were making 4s. 3d. to 5s. 3d. for counts of 28 and 24, and for larger fruits in counts of 20 and 15, prices ranging from 7s. to 10s. per box. During the last week of February when very large quantities were coming forward, the prices fell to about 2s. 6d. to 3s. 9d., and 5s. 3d. to 8s. for similar counts as above. During March good peaches were making 4s. 5s., 6s. per box, and exceptionally large and attractive fruit in counts of 25 and 15 made 8s., 9s., and up to 15s. per box.

I need not offer any suggestions as to packing, as this is now well understood by the shippers. I will, however, warn beginners to be very careful about the grading; the fruit contained in each box must be as nearly as possible of equal size and quality. I will recommend all shippers, the experienced as well as the beginners, to mark their boxes at the end with the words 'Clingstone' or 'Frestone' as well as the name of the variety and the count, but I must again point out that the English and Continental markets do not want yellow flesh peaches or clingstones, no matter what the variety is. The peach required by these markets must comply with the following description: It must be round in shape, a large size, with a good rich colour, white flesh and a free stone.