

COMMERCIAL GRAPE GROWING.



GRAPE growing is no exception to the rule that every industry, as it develops, is continually changing. If it is profitable, strong competition comes in, and then new and cheaper methods must be adopted. A few years ago grapes were grown in many sections and shipped to market without any particular system. This haphazard practice is still carried on in some localities, but at no profit to the producer. In 1890 grapes netted the grower 24c. per 8-lb. basket. In 1894 12½c. per basket was the average, and future prices will, in all probability, be even lower. It is, therefore, essential that perfect system and close attention to details be observed, otherwise the business will be a losing one. A vineyard must be located on high ground, free from spring frost, or a single night may destroy a year's prospects. The soil must be productive, or the yield will not be sufficient to pay expenses. On poor, sandy soils, barnyard manure has been used with good results, especially when applied in connection with wood ashes. Let the system of pruning and training be the simplest and most inexpensive. Other fruits are self-supporting; but the grape must have its trellis, which, even with cheap wire and posts, is the most costly item in the vineyard. The old plan of spur pruning must be abandoned. It leaves too much wood, and the fruit is a mass of imperfect clusters, which frequently fail to ripen properly. The Kniffen system, of four horizontal canes of the previous year's growth, has proved the most successful and is being universally adopted. Under this system the clusters are of good size and seldom fail to ripen properly. Pruning can be done more rapidly, workmen "catch on" to this method more readily and are less likely to destroy the usefulness of a vine by carelessness.

Regular and systematic cultivation is most essential to success. During spring and early summer, if a spell of wet weather comes on, the vines must be sprayed with Bordeaux mixture to prevent rot and anthracnose. It is always a good plan to spray before the buds start in spring, as this prevents mischief later on. To start a vineyard new, each acre will require the following expenditure:—

600 vines, set 8 x 9 feet	\$6 00
Plowing, fitting and setting.....	6 00
Cultivating and hoeing, 1st year	5 00
Pruning (cutting back to 2 buds)	50
Cultivating and hoeing, 2nd year	7 50
Pruning to one cane (3 to 5 feet long)	1 00
300 posts	15 00
350 lbs. wire (No. 11).....	7 00
Setting posts, wiring and tying	12 00
Cultivation and hoeing, 3rd year	10 00

\$70 00