

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

PEACH CULTURE.

There are portions of the Province of Ontario where peaches can be grown, and those who reside in these favoured localities are to be envied because of their ability to raise this luscious fruit. Few of them, however, understand how to manage a peach tree so as to secure a strong stocky growth, and a regular development of fruit buds. Usually peach trees have a very scraggy look, and too many of them get prematurely old. It is possible to grow peach trees in such a manner that they will be compact masses of verdure, looking, when in bloom, like immense posies. Mr. T. C. Robinson, an enterprising fruit grower of Owen Sound, gives the following account of his treatment of a young peach orchard during its first season after planting out, which shews that he knows what he is doing. He says, under date of Dec. 19th, 1881:—

"My 500 peach trees smile greenly to the tips in spite of one or two nipping frosts three weeks ago, and although only planted this spring, shew an array of fruit buds that promise bushels of fruit, if they do not so nearly burst that a February or March frost finds the heart. 'Would I let them set fruit?' Yes, sir. I cut them back to walking sticks in planting; then, as the remaining buds pushed, I selected three or at most four to form main branches, and cut, rubbed, or pinched off all others, except a central upper one for leader. As these buds developed into branches a foot to eighteen inches long, I pinched them to make them stocky. As the sap accumulated in them on account of this check to their length, they grew stout and thick, lots of almost dormant buds turned into active fruit buds, and four or five (perhaps more) towards the end broke and lengthened out into secondary branches. Continuing the process with these secondary branches, I selected say two prominent ones, and cut off the others, finally pinching these towards the end of the season. And now I have trees with the sap, which, if undirected, must have gone into innumerable slender twigs, fit for nothing but pruning away for the bonfire, stored up instead in the body of the tree in longer, more fibrous roots, in stout branches half an inch to three-quarters thick of this year's growth, and in healthy bark and wood cells that frosty winds howl around in vain, and finally in wood and fruit buds set close together, and waiting for the first touch of spring's magic wand—and all grown without an ounce of manure on 'worn-out sandy loam.' No, I don't prune them off if they come out coy and blushing in pink and green. I drink in the beauty and chuckle over my neighbours with ripe peaches if Providence sends a fitting season, and pettings with good manure, and pamperings with wood ashes, and more encouragement with thumb and finger in similar pinchings, will coax them towards similar results another year—coaxings that they always respond to. Thinning of the fruit may be necessary—no doubt will be resorted to for fine specimens; but no more wholesale pruning away of fruit and wood for me. It is a deliberate waste of so much of the year's work. I was a fiend of pinching before—I am a disciple now. Do the square thing by peach trees, and you can have them

to eat as soon after planting as strawberries—to sell as soon as blackberries. Well, I may lose these trees this winter, or may lose the buds from winter or late spring frosts; but if they don't push from mild winter weather, I *think not*; and I have good hopes of eating and selling Alexanders within a week of the 1st of August of next year."

If, in addition to its making more vigorous and better-looking trees, this system of management secures early fruiting, there is enough said in its praise to make it worthy of general adoption.

MUSLIN FOR HOT-BED SASH.

Rufus Mason, of Nebraska, says:—"Three years' experience with muslin sashes where the thermometer ranges from 20° below zero to 70° above, satisfies me of their superiority. I make a square frame of 1½-inch stuff, with a single bar of the same size down the middle, cover it with common, heavy, unbleached muslin; paint it over two coats with boiled linseed oil, and find it far better than glass. Have had no freezing or scalding, but better coloured plants, more stocky, and better able to withstand early transplanting. After the hot-bed is filled with manure, lay in the soil so as to come within three inches of the muslin, sloping exactly as it does. As the season advances, the bed will settle about as fast as the growth of the plants require it. This plan prevents the plants from becoming long-legged, which is the main cause of the slow after-growth, and in the cabbage family, of so many plants failing to make solid heads.

MUSHROOMS.

The mushroom is a very accommodating plant. We have seen them growing in old tubs, in out-of-the-way corners of sheds, in abandoned greenhouses, on shelves in stables, and in every case giving an apparently good and healthful crop. All that is needed for success is a temperature from fifty to sixty degrees, some fresh horse manure and a little spawn. Having procured what fresh horse manure is needed, mix it well with about one-third of its bulk of good loam, and you are prepared to make your beds in whatever place you prefer. If you determine to form beds, make them narrow—certainly not more than five feet in height. The material must be made compact by beating down, as evenly as possible. If under cover, the bed may be made flat on top; but if in the open air, they should be rounded, to shed the rain. After the beds have been made a week, there will be considerable heat produced by the fermentation of the manure. Bricks of spawn should have been secured previously, and they can be sent everywhere, post or express, free for about thirty cents per pound. Break them into pieces as large as a walnut, and insert in the beds just below the surface, about ten inches apart. One pound of spawn is sufficient for a space two by six feet. If there seems to be too much heat, do nothing for a week or ten days, until it somewhat subsides. Then cover the bed with an inch or more of good earth, pressing it down with the back of a spade. It is not likely in a large bed water will be needed at all, but if the material should appear very dry, water lightly

with warm water. In small beds or pails, or anything of the kind, it is probable water will be needed once or twice. Mushrooms will begin to appear in about six weeks after planting the spawn, and can be gathered for three or four weeks. In gathering take up the mushrooms entire, leaving no stem in the bed, and placing a little earth in the hole made by removal. When the crop is gathered, cover the bed with a little more earth, beat it down gently, and give a pretty good moistening with tepid water, and in about a month more another crop will be produced.

FRUIT TREES FOR ORNAMENT.

Can any one tell me why a grape-vine is not a suitable ornament for a front porch? or what would be the objection to a fine standard pear or grand wide-spreading apple tree in the lawn? Was ever a blossoming shade tree more beautiful than either of these when the flowers come out? and is not the rich green of the leaves a thing of beauty all the season? When the purple clusters hang thick on the vine, and the red apples and juicy pears shine through the leaves in autumn, it certainly could not take anything from the beauty of the scene. When one has but little space, as in a village lot, could not the useful and ornamental be profitably combined by putting in handsome fruit trees in the place of those designed only for shade? and a pretty dwarf pear or two would look well among the shrubbery. A row of young cherries before a fine house with a many-pillared porch is one of the pleasant memories of my early walks to school. The old doctor who owned the property gave those trees as much care and attention as he ever did a rich patient. He was almost daily doing something for them, if it was only to pour a bucket of suds about their roots, loosen the ground a little, or bury a dish of bones under the soil. But their marvellous growth was the wonder of the village, and in a very few years they cast a deep shade over the whole sidewalk and yielded a bountiful supply of great ox-heart cherries. Let us give our children all such memories we can, for they are healthful for mind and body both. Fruit, or no fruit, means riches or poverty in the minds of our little children, and there is certainly a thriftiness about a home well supplied with this luxury, which is better than an old stocking full of hard dollars in the strong chest, but only one old crab-apple tree in the pasture lot.—*Cor. Indiana Farmer.*

THE "OFF-YEAR" FOR APPLES.

Most orchards have got into the habit of bearing plentifully one year, and failing the next. There seems no good reason for this, though some deem it a peculiarity of this best of fruits. It is doubtless the result of over-bearing and under-feeding. Apple trees are seldom indulged with a dressing of manure. They blossom freely; a larger quantity of fruit sets than can be vigorously sustained; the trees are exhausted, and must have a season's rest. By thinning the fruit in what is called the bearing year, mulching, manuring, pinching in and pruning back, apple trees may be cured of the habit of irregular bearing, and induced to yield moderately good crops every year.