



SMALL FRUIT CULTURE FOR MARKET.

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If the planting is not done until spring, most soils suitable for small fruits will be benefited by a deep fall plowing, followed by a shallower cross-plowing as early in spring as the land is workable, or by thorough and repeated working with one of the numerous forms of disk or spading harrows now in use.

This should be followed by a lighter pulverizer or smoothing harrow before the soil becomes lumpy. The roller or plank clod crusher can sometimes be used to advantage, but if the soil be taken at the proper stage of dryness the treatment noted above will rarely fail to accomplish the desired result. Too much attention can hardly be bestowed upon this matter of soil preparation, yet it is often slighted by small-fruit planters. Errors in fertilizing, cultivating, or pruning can sometimes be corrected by subsequent good treatment, but deficient preparation cannot be overcome during the existence of the crop.

MANURING.

Unless the soil is very rich from previous fertilizing, the crop will be largely increased by the application of well-rotted stable manure, say 20 tons to the acre, applied before the final plowing or thoroughly worked into the soil with a spading harrow. If stable manure is not obtainable, finely ground

bone and muriate of potash can be profitably used on many soils. Nitrate of soda can sometimes be applied in moderation with profit. If the soil is of a sandy nature and known to be deficient in nitrogen, a preparatory crop of crimson clover will doubtless be advantageous in climates where this plant succeeds, or other leguminous crops may be grown and plowed in. Hardwood ashes are excellent on most soils and, in general, commercial fertilizers rich in phosphoric acid and potash may be profitably used. The selection of the fertilizer that can be most profitably used on any particular soil must be determined by local experiment, however, and upon the very field in question, unless tests have been made on similar soils in the immediate neighborhood.

It should be said that among growers who ship their fruit long distances, there is an increasing tendency to favor commercial fertilizers rather than stable manure, on the ground that the fruit thus grown is firmer and of better carrying quality. This applies particularly to fruit grown in the humid climate of the South Atlantic and Gulf States, where most fruit plants incline to make a rank growth, which produces watery fruit, and where rains during the ripening season are frequent. A considerable gain results also from the absence of weed seeds from prepared fertilizers,