

Spraying in the early spring with copper sulphate compounds for the purpose of preventing the plum rot, or *Monilia*, of the fruit, may also prevent the development of the shot hole fungus.

ROOT PRUNING.

493. SIR,—Will you kindly tell me in the next issue how far from the trunk of apple trees should I prune the roots. The trees are twenty years old, Kings, and very large.
O. F. BURCHARD, *Kings Court, Ont.*

This is very little practised by horticulturists in Ontario, and the operation is one that should be attempted with considerable caution. The danger lies in too much lessening the vigor of the trees by cutting off those roots by which supplies are taken in for its growth and development. If the roots are over-pruned, the life of the tree will be shortened. The benefit consists in checking the over-luxuriant wood growth, in order that the elements of nourishment, which are stored up in the tree, may be diverted to the formation of fruit buds. The same end is accomplished by grafting the trees on dwarf stock, as when a pear tree is grafted on the quince, or an apple tree on Paradise stock, and by summer pruning of the top. In England, where gardening is a higher art than here, root pruning has been much practised.

Root pruning should be done in the autumn or early winter. A trench is dug around the tree, at a distance from the trunk proportioned to the size of the tree. If begun when young, the tree may be so dwarfed that it will never become large; but, in the case of our correspondent, where the trees have grown twenty years and must be very large, the trench should be at least 10 or 15 feet from the trunk. The exact distance in each case will need to be left to the judgment of the operator. The roots should thus be laid bare, and, if found to be destitute of fibres, the leaders should be cut off in order to produce fibrous growth.

Mr. Rivers, an English nurseryman, who practises this root pruning yearly, with his apple and pear trees, sometimes makes them prolific dwarfs, growing only six feet apart, and producing abundantly. But Mr. Downing is of the opinion that, in this country, a single pruning is all that will be required to bring over-luxuriant trees into a fruitful condition.

Should our correspondent be successful in bringing his King apple trees into a state of productiveness, by giving them a thorough root pruning, the result will be worth making public through our journal. The great objection to this variety is its unproductiveness. Some say that, if top-grafted upon the Talman Sweet, the King becomes productive; but very few of the orchards of this variety have been so grafted, and, consequently, we will be glad if root pruning will accomplish the desired end.