



FRUIT CULTURE—VII.

THE GRAPE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that there are some four millions of grape vines in Ontario, many farmers even yet do not grow a single pound of this fine fruit, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the Province, where the difficulties of grape culture are supposed to be greater than they really are. The professional vineyardist of Southern Ontario who counts his vines by the thousand has possibly not a great deal to learn. The difficulty now is not so much the production of the fruit as the finding of a good market. But scattered through all parts of the country are people who own small vineyards which are by no means producing a high quality of fruit, and still others who, buying few or no grapes, yet have no vineyard of their own. It is to these classes more than to the commercial grower that the following remarks on grape culture are directed.

SOIL AND EXPOSURE.—The best site for a vineyard is a gentle slope facing to the south or southeast. In the low levels there is more danger from frosts, and on a northern exposure there will be some difficulty in ripen-

ing the later varieties. The grape loves a rich, warm and dry soil. The preparation of the land should include underdraining if the subsoil is at all wet or non-porous. It will thrive on sandy or gravelly soils, but on the very light soils there is a greater tendency to disease, especially to mildew. A rich, well-drained clay loam is the most satisfactory. The general opinion is that the quality of the fruit is higher on the heavier ground, though Fuller asserts the contrary.

PLANTING AND CULTIVATION.—Vines of the strong-growing varieties, like Niagara and Rogers, may be planted as one-year-olds. As a general rule strong two-year-old vines are the best to plant. Varieties like Delaware, Catawba and Moore's Early may be planted eight feet apart, but as most vineyards contain many of the strong-growing kinds which require more room, a good distance would be ten or eleven feet each way. This would allow convenient cross-cultivation before the trellis is put up, and give ample room for harrow, wagons, etc., between the rows later on. The vine should be planted fairly deep and the earth well packed