

Early corn, onions, carrots, beets, etc., are good crops to grow as inter-crops in the young orchard, because they all require good cultivation and generally tempt the manager to liberal fertilizing.

In fruit districts where canning-factories are being built, such crops as tomatoes, corn, and beans may be grown, as it is often difficult for the factories to get a sufficient supply of these crops.

When clovers or vetches are grown it is well to leave a good wide strip on each side of the trees for cultivation, especially where irrigation is not available, so that the trees will not suffer from lack of moisture. One crop can then be taken off, and the second crop allowed to grow to plough under next spring. This supplies nitrogen and adds humus to the soil. Small fruits are often grown as inter-crops, and sometimes with very good results. Bush-fruits should never be planted within 9 feet from the row of trees, and the ground needs extra good cultivation. There is always a danger of leaving bush-fruits too long in the orchard. In irrigated sections strawberries are sometimes grown with good results. There is not the danger of over-wintering this crop that there is in the case of the bush-fruits, as the strawberry season is over quite early.

Young orchards should never be left in sod. Sod lands are not only drier than cultivated ground, but they are favourite breeding-places of insects. Mice often harbour in sod lands, and often do considerable damage to young trees.

There are a few cases where sod may be grown in old orchards, but it is the exception rather than the rule. In such a case as a very steep hillside where there was plenty of moisture available it might be an advantage to leave the orchard in sod. However, nothing should be taken off the ground. The grass should be cut and left on the ground.

We are often asked if it pays to grow inter-crops in the bearing orchard. There is no doubt but that it does not pay. One cannot expect to get two crops of produce from the same ground. The roots of the bearing trees require all the ground for the best development of the tree and fruit. The only crop that should be grown in a bearing orchard is a cover crop to plough under.

The writer does not advocate cropping the young orchard in all cases. Where a grower has sufficient capital to carry him over until the fruit-trees are bearing, it may be better not to take anything off the ground. He has a much better chance to enrich the ground by ploughing under leguminous crops, as clover, etc., when the trees are young than when they are large and bearing. It is sometimes hard to get a good catch when the trees are large and shade the ground. If one is in such a position he should be able to have the ground in a better condition when the trees are old enough to bear fruit than the man who is obliged to grow inter-crops. However, we are not all able to do this and we must be governed largely by our circumstances.

Taking the situation as a whole, it would seem that the opportunities for the small fruit-grower are encouraging, not only to make a living, but an income as well, while his orchard is coming into bearing age. Many men are making extra large profits from the inter-crops, but some are doing it at the expense of the orchard. However, this need not be if extra good care is taken to replace the plant-food and humus which is lost by the growing of crops. It must always be remembered that where crops are growing between the trees, they are taking food material out of the soil, and that it is necessary to fertilize the ground well in the meantime, so that the soil will not be in an impoverished condition when the trees begin to bear.