



Packing, Fancy Tomatoes: M. O. Field & Sons, Grimsby, Ont.

so as to maintain a continuous supply of solid, crisp stalks. To ensure that the color may be good, and also that high and weak growths may not be developed, the roots and soil should be maintained in a thoroughly moist condition by frequent applications of tepid

water. I should like to emphasize the fact that it is a great mistake to water plants with ice-cold water just taken from the tap. Water which has to be used for watering plants, no matter what they may be, should be allowed to stand in the greenhouse tank over night.

Grading Vegetables for Market*

Paul Work, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

EVERY year sees the work of grading cutting a larger figure in the work of marketing vegetables than it did before. Grading was once unknown. To-day the producer of fruits and vegetables is following close upon the trail of the manufacturer who long ago realized the necessity of uniformity. The citrus people took the lead in this. The western apple shippers were next, with the vegetable shippers close upon their heels. The progressive market gardeners are now awake to the fact that two gnarled cucumbers cut the price of the whole bushel. Hundreds of growers are still asleep.

Every man and every community must make its own plan of grading. What one market does not suit another. Many are discouraged in setting the standard high because the lower grades are becoming increasingly difficult to sell. We had to discard a considerable portion of the second grade tomatoes at Cornell during the past season, but they were paid. At one time ordinary run-of-the-field fruit was bringing twenty-five

cents a basket. Our primes sold at forty cents, and seconds at twenty and twenty-five cents.

Seconds are not wanted in large quantity on most markets. Many hold that the moral of this is, "Don't grade. If the consumer doesn't want seconds, make him take them with the best." But the true moral is, "Don't grow seconds." Of course, there will be some inferior fruit, but if by selecting a well bred strain of a good variety, and by giving the best of culture, we can reduce the seconds to very low proportions, we will not mind leaving a few culls in the field.

A COMMON MISTAKE

One of the most common mistakes in grading is in reducing the standards when the price drops. When markets are glutted, the question ceases to be one of securing a high price, but it becomes a question of moving the crop or letting it rot. People continue to use the product, and that in large quantities. They are willing to pay a price which will cover marketing cost and a good share of production, but the question is, which grower sells and which does not? Naturally, the one with the best sells.

The following clipping, which is typical of a large number that appeared in our trade papers last season, furnishes good evidence on this point:

"Lettuce from State points has been in free receipt, and much has been sold for less than charges. Fancy, heavy-headed stock is worth fifty to seventy-five cents a bushel, but average grades neglected at ten to twenty-five cents a package."

The time of oversupply is the time when grading counts. The grower has established his trade on a basis of quality, and by maintaining that basis, he is able to hold on while the other fellow drops out. Moreover, Mr. Grader still holds the trade when the market picks up.

It is by no means easy to maintain a standard of grading. One naturally desires a maximum of primes and a minimum of seconds, and he even unconsciously tends downward. With hired help, the problem is much more difficult. The first essential is to form a mental image of the standard for each grade, working it out carefully and making it neither too high nor too low. Fix these standards as far as possible by the use of sizing boards and the like. Constant and rigid inspection is then necessary. If a large quantity is handled, each worker should have a number to be placed in each basket. Thus responsibility is fixed. Just here is one of the greatest advantages of machine-grading. A machine is free from the failing of human nature.

Mulching Ginseng

E. A. Russell, Brantford, Ont.

We have tried several methods of protecting the ginseng seed bed. A bed on which a half inch of sawdust was used gave the best results. In the beds on which leaves were used the seeds did not germinate so quickly and a number of plants were lost by being smothered or by the stems breaking because they were too long after growing through the leaves. In another bed the leaves were removed in April and the plants did well. The sawdust permits the air to get at the young plants as soon as they appear above the ground and the result is that the stem is stronger than when anything else is used. For older plants a mulch of leaves or rotted manure is suitable as the stem of the plant is strong enough to grow through without injury.

In the spring, when the plants appear, shade must be provided, which is usually done by erecting a lath screen. If this is delayed the plants may be injured and if they are left unprotected from the sun until June they will wither and die. During the growing season the only attention required is to keep the plants free from weeds and these will not be numerous on account of the mulch,

*Extract from an address delivered at the last annual convention of the Ontario Vegetable Growers' Association.