

HORTICULTURE

Dominion Fruit Crop Report

Weather conditions in Canada have been favorable during the month of June for fruit development.

Apples.—Eastern Canada will have a large crop of winter apples from present indications. Early and fall varieties will not yield as heavily. The apple prospects in the British Columbia will hardly reach the average.

Pears.—An average crop is expected in the commercial pear sections of Ontario.

Plums are estimated somewhat lower, since the heavy bloom, but are showing for an average crop, except in British Columbia where the crop will be light.

Peaches.—Early peaches are reported medium to full crop; late peaches medium. "Curl leaf" is very prevalent, affecting Elbertas particularly.

Grapes.—Concords promise a full crop; white and red grapes, medium to full crop. Cheries will be a good average crop. Tomatoes promise a good crop.

Small fruits promise well everywhere. Strawberries in Southern Ontario are a very large crop.

Insect and fungus diseases are fairly prevalent, but comparatively little damage is reported yet, except from the cankerworm in Nova Scotia.

United States.—Present indications show about an average crop to compete with Canadian winter stock.

Great Britain and Continental Europe.—The prospects are for more than an average crop of fruit.—A. McNeill, Chief, Fruit Division.

Harvesting Strawberries

"To have strawberries in the best condition for keeping and for marketing, they must be picked and not pulled," said Mr. J. P. Dodds, of Peterboro Co., Ont., to a representative of Farm and Dairy who visited his place recently. "At least one half an inch of the stem should be picked with each berry. Keep the berries, misshapen and very small berries out of the boxes. The best policy is to market only saleable fruit. "It is not wise to top the boxes. Have the berries the same all through. Do not bruise the fruit when picking. Pick in the morning or late afternoon. I sell all my fruit in the city of Peterboro, both wholesale and retail. A good local trade can be worked up for a good article."

Thinning Apples

Jos. Gilbertson, Norfolk Co., Ont.

Methods of Thinning.—1. Use a four foot step ladder, for as much of the tree as possible. 2. Thin out all small and deformed apples. 3. Do not leave more than two apples together, and if tree be heavily laden thin to one.

On July 7th, last year, I commenced to thin Greenings and continued on Holland Pippins, Alexanders, and Baldwins. Thinning Spys before last of July is not recommended, but af-

towards it may be proceeded with until harvest.

In 1908, this work on my entire orchard of Greenings, Baldwins, Kings, Golden Russets, Spys and a few other varieties effected such a uniformity of size in the ripened crop that packing in boxes, a method certain of adoption in the near future, was made comparatively easy. It is only thus that we will be enabled to receive the highest market price, and prove our box apples equal to those of Oregon and British Columbia.

By thinning, the buds for the following year are benefitted by the nourishment which is thus uselessly absorbed by the unsaleable fruit. Proper modes of fertilizing, thinning, spraying, cultivating, and pruning cannot but produce apples fine enough for the world's consumption.

Although I found the expense of thinning in 1908 averaged five cents a barrel, the cost of picking and packing was much reduced in not having to pay for the fruit of small and inferior fruit. My entire crop of 880 barrels was picked and packed for 30 cents a barrel, and, including the cost of thinning, was handled cheaper than in the previous year.

From the method adopted for the first time in 1908, I reached results heretofore unobtainable, for only seven per cent of the fruit was marked as ninety-three per cent "seconds" while "firsts." Therefore, in conclusion, as advice to the fruit growers of this country is to thin apples, peaches, and in fact all fruits where the vines or trees are overloaded. From a pamphlet issued by Ontario Fruit Growers' Association.

Soil Fertilization

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station, in Bulletin No. 91, summarizes the results of experiments in soil fertilization as follows:

1. Fertilizers are but one of several factors that affect success in orcharding. The others include varieties, location, soil management, spraying, pruning and general orchard care.

2. The best orchard treatment probably consists in the discovery of the level of the elevation of it to the maintenance of a proper balance in the treatment thereafter.

3. In some orchards fertilizers and manures are the limiting factor, while in others it is something else. Hence, in general, it is questionable whether they should be applied in large amounts, until the orchardist has evidence that they are needed.

4. The need of a fertilizer is indicated by the trees being deficient in growth, foliage or fruit, after the other factors are apparently right. Under these conditions applications of manures and fertilizers can scarcely fail to produce beneficial results.

5. The indications are that nitrogen has more value as an orchard fertilizer than is generally accorded it. Its account of its effect on fruit, however, on used most freely on the earlier soils or in localities with rather long growing seasons. It is probable that failure to secure results on apples from the application of potash and phosphates may often be due to a deficient supply, which thus becomes the limiting factor for that orchard. If applied in the nitrate form the time of application must be right.

6. The greatest actual improvement in value of fruit has been secured on plots receiving phosphoric acid and potash in the form of low-grade solids. The exact cause of this is not yet known.

7. Where plant food is needed, we cannot improve upon the general recommendation of stable manure (about 10 tons per acre) or leguminous cover-crops, alternated with a fertilizer carrying about 30 lbs. of nitrogen, 60 lbs. of phosphoric acid, and 100 lbs. of potash per acre.

8. To accompany this system of fertilization, the indications are that the proper soil management for most situations is tillage of the orchard. The cover crop while the orchard is young, followed by a mixed grass and leguminous sod or sod-mulch when bearing age and size is reached. After the bearing habit is established, a return to tillage every second or third year should be made, increasing the frequency of tillage with the age of the orchard and the demands of the fruit.

9. Current orchard practice may be improved by the owner's adopting the methods apparently best for the orchards as a whole, and then maintaining some parts for experimentally determining whether the methods chosen are really best for their conditions.

Express Rates Restored

The appeal of the fruit growers of the district near Queenston in the Niagara peninsula against the raising of express rates on fruit shipped to Toronto, was heard with approval by July 7th. Judge Mabee, ordered the Canadian Express Company to restore its rates on fruit from Queenston to Toronto to 30 cents as the company had agreed that the rates in effect when the Railway Commission undertook an investigation of express rates, would be maintained while the matter was before the Board. Subsequently, the Canadian Express Company raised its rates from 30 cents to 40 cents despite this agreement. According to the company this was done because the business did not pay at the lower rate but, as remarked by Judge Mabee, it is a "peculiar coincidence" that the Canadian Express Company raised its rates immediately after the Dominion Express Company had gone out of fruit carrying business in that locality.

During the hearing of the case, Judge Mabee took several opportunities to express contempt for the ac-

tion of the Canadian Express Company and, in scathing terms, disallowed the change of rate. The decision of the Board was a great victory for the fruit men and incidentally reflected much credit on Mr. W. H. Bunting, of St. Catharines, who stated the case for the growers.

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During the second week of the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, a number of important meetings will be held in the tent of the Department of Agriculture. On Tuesday, Sept. 7th, at 2.30 p.m., the directors of the Ontario Vegetable Growers' Association; on Wednesday, Sept. 8th, at 2.30 p.m., the directors of Fairs and Exhibitions Association; and on Thursday, Sept. 9th, at 2.30 p.m., the directors of the Ontario Horticultural Society.

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