

Japanese Fruits.

In selecting varieties of trees to plant next spring, give a good place to the recent importations from Japan. The Japanese varieties of plums excel ours in size, color, productiveness, and flavor. They have been well tested here, and can be relied upon. Japanese pears are not equal in quality to ours, though some of their varieties are of enormous size. The Kieffer is a cross from a Japanese kind, and is being very extensively planted. I planted fifty of them two years ago, and I must say that they have grown very vigorously, and give fine promise. I hear, however, some contradictory reports regarding this Kieffer pear. Some speak of it in terms of highest praise, as being a large, luscious, beautiful fruit and very productive; a few condemn it as small and hard. It seems, at all events, to appreciate good surroundings and careful attention.

The Elberta peach is another gift from Japan, or rather a seedling from Japan stock. It is hardy, vigorous, and prolific, besides being a large, well-flavored fruit. It is thus a valuable addition to our older varieties.

The Abundance plum, the Kieffer pear, and the Elberta peach, all of Japanese origin, are now considered among the most valuable of their kind on this continent.

Public Tastes.

It is a discouraging fact to a fruit-grower that often his best and choicest products are not appreciated according to their merits. Something else should be cultivated along with choice fruit; and that is, public taste. When you go to interview a nurseryman with regard to what varieties to plant, he will ask you whether you want a good variety, or one the fruit of which will sell most readily. The public will buy a variety that looks well, in preference to one that tastes well. That is something that remains a constant puzzle to those who really appreciate fruit. Dealers will tumble over one another to get Champion grapes which no fruit-grower would put near his mouth. Niagara grapes are demanded two weeks before they are ripe. Showy apples, like the King, command a higher price than the modest-looking, though much superior, Greening. It is in pears, especially, that public taste is at fault. I remember, on one occasion, shipping to market two baskets of pears together, one of the Clairgeau variety,

the other a Beurre Bosc, both good samples of their kind. The Clairgeau is a rather large pear, well-shaped, mellow-looking, with a faint blush of red, giving a delicate under-coloring to the skin; but the flesh is coarse and without flavor. The Beurre Bosc is a homely-looking, undersized, or at best medium-sized, pear, with a plain, russet-skin—though, when one looks closely, one can see that its texture is fine—altogether an unattractive pear. The Beurre Bosc is one of the most delicious fruits of the orchard, and, among pears, has no rival but the equally homely Seckel, yet for the Clairgeau basket I received 75 cents, and for the Beurre Bosc 50 cents.

There is an earlier variety of pear, called from its shape the Bell. It is a beautiful pear to look at, but so acrid and austere in taste that the very worms will have nothing to do with it. Needless to say, it generally commands a fair price in the market.

This state of things cannot but work harm to the grower as well as the consumer. The latter, in his disappointment, will not feel disposed to buy again; the former, in like disappointment, will cultivate showy fruit in preference to that which has intrinsic merit. The remedy lies in the cultivation of public taste. The matter will gradually right itself. People should not be in a hurry to buy fruit before it is ripe, and growers should not be in a hurry to ship it; and all concerned should bear in mind that the proof of the fruit, particularly of the pear, lies in the tasting of it.

Fertilizers.

It is pretty generally known that, although there are many other elements in the construction of a plant, there are only three that the soil will not supply indefinitely. These three are nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash. The other elements are just as important, and one of them, carbon, is required in greater quantity, but the soil or the air contains an inexhaustible supply of them, and they need not be taken into account when the question of fertilization is considered. Some trees draw much less of these three than others. The olive, for example, obtains the materials for its oil entirely from the atmosphere, and, in consequence, remains a long period with unimpaired vigor, though no fertilizing substance is added to the soil. But all our common fruits require liberal feeding. They draw heavily from the soil, and the successful fruit-grower must use fertilizers.