

### ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE GOOSEBERRY.

Like the currant, the gooseberry was apparently unknown to the ancients, and it was probably about the sixteenth century that it was first cultivated in Europe. Since that time a wonderful improvement in the size of the fruit has taken place. The Dutch are thought to have made the first marked improvement, but its present development has been largely brought about in England.

Varieties of English and European gooseberries are derived from the species *Ribes Grossularia*, a native of north Europe. Varieties of this species have not succeeded well in America until lately, being very subject to Gooseberry Mildew which was thought to be very difficult of control. The past few years, however, have demonstrated that the mildew can, if properly treated, be successfully combated.



FIG. 2.—Black currant plantation of Mr. J. E. Henry, Winona.

The American gooseberries are derived chiefly from *Ribes oxycarpum*, a species native to America. Concerning the origin and history of our varieties, W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist, Ottawa, writes in his *On Bush Fruits*, 1907, as follows:—

"As late as 1846 no cultivated varieties of American species of gooseberries were mentioned by writers, the first reference according to Bailey, being in 1849, in the *Northern Fruit Culturist*, by Goodrich, where the author writes: 'We have it from good authority that native sorts have been discovered both in New Hampshire and Vermont well adapted to garden culture.' In 1847 the Houghton's Seedling was exhibited at a meeting of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, this being the first improved form of the native gooseberry of which there is a record. This variety was originated or found by Abel Houghton, Jr., Lynn, Mass. It is probably a seedling of the native species, *Ribes oxycanthoides*. The first improvement on the Houghton was the Downing, a seedling of the Houghton, which was originated by Charles Downing, Newburgh, N.Y., and first brought into notice in 1853. It is thought by some authorities to have been a hybrid between Houghton and *Ribes Grossularia*, the European