

THE AGE OF BEARING TREES.



ONE of the greatest disappointments to the one not conversant with the subject, and who wishes to plant fruit trees, is to find that he cannot begin plucking fruit from the trees the year after he plants them. I have witnessed this disappointment in so many that I am quite prepared for it when the question is asked of me. It happened recently that a lady asked me how long it would take an apple tree to bear which she had just planted. The tree appeared to be a four year-old one, and was about seven feet high and fairly headed. I answered, "It will be about ten years." She thought this a dreadful long while to wait, but the only consolation I could give her was that she would possibly see fruit on it in five years, but it would be ten before it would bear what might be termed a crop. I am satisfied that what I said was right. There is but little fruit to be looked for from the apple and the pear until ten years from the time of planting has gone by. I have in mind some pear trees planted by me seventeen years ago, and, though fruit has been gathered from them every year since they were planted, they have not yet reached perfection of growth. I think about two bushels per tree would be about what they bore this year. I find it always consoles amateurs to tell them that some fruit may be expected every year from pears.

With apples the fruiting is rather slower. There need be none whatever looked for for two or three years after a four-year-old tree has been set out, and the full bearing period will be as much

behind it. The cherry is much like the pear. Some fruit appears to cheer the heart of the owner as soon as the tree is planted, and there is a continuance of it every year, it being a fruit tree that rarely misses a crop. The plum stands between the pear and the apple. It does not start bearing at once, but in favorable situations, where good but not rampant growth is made, a few years bring along the flowers and fruit. Peach trees will often produce flowers from a shoot but one year old from the bud, and it is one of the earliest bearing of all tree fruits. It is a tree which should be set out by all impatient parties, as it brings them something and interests them while waiting for the slower ones to come along.

Quinces will sometimes bear in four or five years, at other times they will stand still for several years, and take nearly ten before bearing but a few fruit. Whenever I find one who asks my opinion on the length of time he will have to wait, if he be of the despondent kind I recommend that some pears and peaches be planted. And besides telling this, I see that the Bartlett is on the pear list, as it bears at once, every year a good crop and cannot be excelled for quality. And besides telling persons just how long they must wait for their trees to bear, it is well that they should understand that good cultivation pays. A well-fed and well-tended fruit tree may be a little slower in fruiting than a starved one, but in the end it will be a better tree and give finer fruit.—Practical Farmer.