

4

A very important point, well illustrated by the Yellow Newtown apple, is that the centre apple of the cluster, and not one of the side apples, should remain. The centre blossom of the cluster comes out first; its stem is usually shorter and stockier than those of the outside blossoms, and at the time of thinning the apple is usually much larger than the others and on a shorter stem. The centre apple usually hangs better to the tree, is the typical apple of the variety, is less liable to variation in shape, and hence, for a shorter stem is better for packing and for appearance's sake.

Fruit-spurs vary greatly in size and vitality; the best spurs bear the best fruit; the weaker spurs should be given a chance to develop into strong ones before next year's crop.

In the production of fancy fruit, thinning pays, and pays well. It means much in the assurance of crops of only high-class fruit. It is not likely to be of value unless the orchard is right in the matters of variety, fertility, cultivation, pruning, and spraying; it is not likely to give good returns unless the high-class article produced is properly packed and marketed by business-like methods. Thinning is an essential feature of the new orchard-culture.

Present indications are that this year will see the largest crop of tree-fruits British Columbia has yet had. Throughout the Province from Vancouver Island to the Kootenays the apple, prune, peach, pear, and plum trees have been full of blossom, and there has been no loss from frost or unfavourable weather. Most of the trees are certain to have a heavy load of fruit, of which very much will be undersized unless thinning is practised. It is hoped that fruit-growers will grasp the situation rightly. The prices for undersized fruit are never very remunerative. It is always the good, large, perfect fruits that bring paying returns. This year the difference in price between fancy and low-grade fruit will be emphasized. Large yields of fruit are promised in Ontario, in the Middle States, Colorado, California, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, as well as in British Columbia. The North-western States, in fact, have the bumper crop of their history; and they look to the Canadian prairies to buy a great deal of it, as times are good in Canada, while money is scarce in the United States. This means that there will be plenty of poor fruit for sale in our markets without any from British Columbia, and the returns for this class of fruit are bound to be low. Neither do the canneries want small fruit; there is no money in pie-peaches for any one. Every grower should resolve that he will not grow any peaches smaller than "five." Any shipper knows that there will be no market for the small stuff, and that even in the earliest varieties we can grow, returns will be unsatisfactory for the small grades. Fortunately there is no good reason why any grower should have any percentage of the small sizes to market.

It is unlikely that any fruit-grower will thin too much; it is quite certain that most growers will not thin enough. While the average man may know about thinning, he is short the nerve necessary to carry it out. Most of the growers in British Columbia have not yet had enough experience to realize the difference in profits on large and small sizes. Those men who see the situation clearly and who recognize the fundamental necessity for adequate thinning should use their influence by getting their neighbours to take it up.

Victoria, B.C., December, 1912.

VICTORIA, B.C.:

Printed by WILLIAM H. CULLIN, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty.
1912.