

RURAL AND SUBURBAN

TRAINING AND SPRAYING OF FRUIT TREES

By James Simpson, 1519 Blanchard Avenue, Victoria.

In the issue of the Colonist of January 2, 1910, there is an article on training and spraying of fruit trees by W. J. L. Hamilton, Salt Spring Island, and I should like to write a few words about the advice he there gives fruit growers.

In passing, I may say that I have often read Mr. Hamilton's papers with much pleasure, though sometimes, as in this case, I could not agree with him. Firstly, then, about his training of fruit trees in the vase form. I have seen in Scotland forty years ago that system thoroughly thrashed out in writings, and also thoroughly practiced, and quite agree with the value of an open tree and thorough exposure of the shoots to sun and air; but there is no use whatever for galvanized wire or galvanized eyes screwed into the wood of the tree, as the whole thing can be easier and much better done by the knife alone. One-year-old trees only should be planted, and they should be headed down to 18 inches from the ground, and the first branch should be from 9 to 12 inches from the ground. Trees for a good paying and easily managed crop should be planted 12 feet apart and never allowed to get more than 10 feet high, as they are thus easily pruned, dressed, thinned and gathered.

Spraying I find since coming here almost an untried evil. Today I pruned a lot of three-year-old trees, the skin of which had been reddened, burned and hardened by the sprays in common use, and thus their healthy and vigorous growth set back for years, and their utility spoiled.

Tomorrow I go to prune and dress a good orchard on the Victoria Arm. Last year this same orchard was sprayed under and by the superintendence of a government official, and the spray was not much more than dry when another and a higher government official came around and said it had not been half done. The proprietor then told him to see that it was rightly done, and so it was done the second time; but as the trees are very bad now with greenfly eggs, oyster scale, woolly aphis and nesting caterpillars, the trees had been the only things to suffer.

The truth of the matter is that this spraying mania is mostly a fraud. See the results on fruit, extracted and printed by the Colonist of December 31, 1908, from that excellent paper, Horticulture. The statements therein are amazing, and, in my opinion, are directly traceable to spraying with deleterious compounds, such as arsenic, arsenites, benzene, bisulphide of carbon, carbolic acid, copperas, corrosive sublimate, hydrocyanic gas, sulphuric acid, kerosene, lime, lye, wash, salt sulphur, all of which are detrimental to plant life, and all of the above are in the government rule book to apply to plants. Surely the people who advised the government to issue such things were old chemists and not practical horticulturists, as the merest tyro with any knowledge of structural botany whatever; and the tenderness of the epidermis of plants would certainly never recommend the application of such wicked destroyers of vegetation.

What is wanted is something to soothe and strengthen the plant, and at the same time kill the insect which troubles the grower, and such has been found and is well known to many in Victoria, the results being quite manifest in the size and beauty of the fruit.

AMATEUR'S GRAPE VINE

The canes in the cool vinery are now ready for the pruning knife, as most of the leaves will have fallen, and those remaining have no further useful function to perform. Now is the time to regulate their area. That pruning of some sort is indispensable, no plant affords stronger proof than the vine. If left for a year or two the annual growth becomes a tangled mass, and if any bunches are produced the grapes are about the size of peas. Thus an annual pruning is necessary to keep the growth within bounds and concentrate its vital and fruit-bearing force into the grapes themselves. Amateurs either grow their grapes on the lateral form or single rod each year, or one can may extend over the roof of the whole house. In either case it is necessary to prune back last year's growths to a couple or so of eyes, excepting where a new piece is needed for filling up a gap, when it is just shortened a point or two. From the two eyes or buds left new growths will appear in spring earlier or later, according to the warmth of the house, and if they are robust they will produce the bunches of grapes that are expected. If weak they will show no fruit.

Few things are more simple than the art of pruning, although many fall over it. A sharp knife and confidence are the chief qualifications. The cut should be clean and not too near the bud and at a sharp angle of at least 45 degrees.

Cleaning and Painting

After the pruning is completed, the operation of rubbing off the loose, stringy bark is undertaken, leaving the stem a rich brown color; it is then painted all over, particularly at the joints, with some such material as Gishurst Compound, a sort of soapy glue, sold in boxes at the seed shops, Abol, or other advertised wash. These will kill red spider, and other pests that may be hibernating behind the loose bark. If the rafters are dirty these also should be washed, or, better still, painted, filling up all holes with putty. If the pruning is done during the next few weeks, when the canes are thoroughly dormant, there is less likelihood of the cuts "bleeding" than when the work is left until later. Amateurs often complain that all the bunches come on the upper growths, leaving the bottom branches

without fruit; this is generally accounted for by the fact of the cane being retained in a slanting position, thus inducing the sap to rush up to the top in spring and spend all its vigor in nourishing these upper growths, leaving those below almost without support. To obviate this, it is a good plan to take down the cane and keep it as low and cool as possible until the buds begin to swell; the point should be kept lower than the middle part, and it is quite easy to effect this by laying the cane along the front of the house, if it is planted there, or along the back if necessary, as the sap will not then rise to the top so quickly. Again, if the canes are kept tied up, the top of the house being warmer than the lower part is a further inducement for the upper growths to take all the nourishment. A practical gardener does not often take down his vines, because he knows how to regulate the heat in all parts of the house, and this somewhat obviates the difficulty referred to. The pruning of vines grown on the extension system is somewhat similar, only that last season's growth is often shortened only instead of being cut back. The canes while dormant need no heat; instead, a good frosting helps them. The difficulty one has with a vine in a house in which there are other plants needing heat is to keep the new growth back as long as possible, as when once this starts it must not be checked by either cold or draught.

Fruit Trees for Walls

A reader residing on the marshy tracts which border the River Thames asks for advice regarding some fruit tree borders he has just made, and the description of trees to plant there. Assuming the locality to be but little elevated above high water mark, deep drainage cannot well be performed, as there would be a difficulty in getting rid of the water. Drains, about 8 feet apart, will not be too close; as this is not an expensive affair, it had better be done securely at first, and care should be taken that the outlet does not get choked. The draining being finished, the border may have attention. Generally, the surface soil in such places is fairly good; therefore, it need not be deeper than 2 feet at the most, provided the bottom is sound and healthy.

The next thing to consider is the proper width required for the wall trees. Wall borders are too often badly used. While a good fruit crop is always expected, a heavy vegetable one at the same time seems hardly fair to the trees. The temptation to plant early vegetables on such a border is too great to be resisted, but it should not be overcome. If possible, make the border about 12 feet wide; set off a portion of 4 feet nearest the wall for the use of the trees alone. The border being prepared, there remains only the arrangement of the fruit trees that are wanted, and, as there will be aspects of all the four quarters, they may be arranged somewhat as follows: South, peach and nectarine; west, apricot; north, cherry and plum; east, cherry and plum. The following is a suitable selection: Peach, Hales Early; nectarine, Elruge or Lord Napier; apricot, Hems Kirk; plum, Victoria and Golden Drop; cherries, Mayduke for east or west aspect, and a Morelo for the north. Peaches and nectarines will sometimes do on east and west walls. The Jefferson and Orleans plum may also be planted on the north walls, if those above do not occupy the whole. Pears might also be planted, if desired. But as many of the most popular fruits of these are better flavored when grown as pyramids grafted on the quince, in the South of England, they are not recommended as wall trees here; and as a pear requires a larger space on a wall than any other fruit tree, it is better to have other fruit when wall room is limited. Vacant spaces may often be employed on the sunny side with tomatoes; or, on the cool sides, red or white currant may be grown, which, if netted, will keep a long time. I have also seen gooseberries similarly treated.—Donald McDonald, F. L. S.

THE BEEF STEER

As the season of the year is again at hand when the subject of feeding steers is in order, we purpose to deal quite extensively with this extremely vital question to Western progress. Owing to there being more damaged grain in some sections this season than usual, we strongly advise "steer feeding" on a much more extensive plan than heretofore.

The chief essentials required to produce prime beef at a profit are:

- 1st, good cattle; 2nd, abundance of nutritious cheap fodder; and 3rd, general good management.

Present conditions are more favorable than the open range for producing typical export steers. When the range was practically unlimited steers were allowed to remain there until they had attained their full growth and a fair degree of fatness, consequently they were usually sold at 4 or 5 years, according to size and condition. A marked and important change has taken place in the profitable type of beef cattle within comparatively recent years.

Formerly size and fat seemed to constitute all that was desired; now the greatest attention is paid to quality in all leading markets, young finished animals not exceeding 3 years being in demand. In the past there has been too little discrimination paid to quality by buyers in the west, thus placing a premium upon size, even if coarse. However, we have good reason to believe that day is near its close.

How quality counts on the British market is shown by the following quotation from an address delivered by John McMillan, M. P.

He says: "I was standing on the cattle market in Glasgow one morning and saw six steers sold, they would average 1,325 lbs., all

grades, and a trifle rough. The highest price was £16 10s. The next animal sold was a well built, round-ribbed, smooth, compact, little beast weighing 1,250 lbs. He was sold for £18 10s. Here was £2, or practically \$10, more money for an animal 75 lbs. lighter in weight. Quality has another advantage fully understood by feeders, namely, that animals of good quality possess in a marked degree the ability to utilize their food to better advantage; that is, although they may not increase in weight more rapidly than ordinary steers, yet the increase is put on the higher priced portions, consequently the animal commands a better price per pound.

At the Illinois Experiment station 60 steers were graded according to quality, a record being kept of all costs. The following is a list of profits according to grading:

Fancy gave a profit each of \$18.15
Choice gave a profit each of \$15.67
Good gave a profit each of \$4.09

This shows how quality counts when records are kept.

Steers from 2-2 to 3 years old, weighing from 1,250 lbs. up, command the highest price for export trade at centres where export conditions are studied, provided they are of desirable conformation and finished:

Beef Characteristics Briefly Defined.

A general beef farm means that the animal must be low set, broad, deep, smooth and even, with parallel lines, says the Farm and Ranch Review. In all lines of business the producer must cater to the consumer if he would succeed; and here, it is perfectly understood that trade requirements call for a thick, even covering of meat of prime quality in the regions of the high-priced cuts, which roughly speaking means the upper half of the body from behind the shoulders backwards, and as a natural result if the animal does not come up to this standard his value is lowered in proportion as he departs from it. This proves to us the necessity for a broad, straight, smooth, even back, deeply fleshed, a thick, broad loin, ribs long, arched and evenly covered, a full, deep, wide chest, large girth, full crops, and long, deep, wide hindquarters. There should be no "tucked up" appearance, just behind the fore-leg, for this indicates a lack of constitution. A full flank, even with underline, is also very desirable, and any animal seriously cut up there is deficient in depth from loin to flank, which is very objectionable. Broad buttocks and a full twist, well let down, are also important.

Quality, as before intimated, is desirable, and this is best told by handling, although a traited eye is seldom deceived. The flesh on the high-priced portions should feel firm, yet mellow, and be very uniform, alike free from hard rolls or blubbery patches. A coarse, bony, slab-sided animal, bare of flesh on ribs, and with dairy thighs, a harsh hide and wiry coat, is about the most undesirable type imaginable. That a mellow, elastic hide indicates a good doer is known to all stockmen, and the reason is that the secretions of the skin are in perfect order, and from that we can justly conclude that the inner skin, the lining of the stomach, etc., is also in the best condition; thus the animal is able to assimilate the full nourishment which his food contains, consequently gains rapidly and has that thrifty, sleek appearance we all admire.

The beef steer should show strong breed character, that is, be a good grade of one of the beef breeds. He should be active and vigorous, which denotes good rustling ability, but not restless, as a fidgety disposition is not conducive to heavy fleshing, inasmuch that it does not indicate that desirable, contented temperament which stockmen prize. Combine aptitude to put on flesh rapidly with an early maturing predisposition, and the vital question of the beef producer as regards type is solved. This phase of the matter is of greater importance under present conditions than when the open range provided all needed food; then it mattered little whether extra feed was required to produce beef; now it is desirable to practice economy by husbanding your resources in every possible manner, and one of the best and surest ways is to use animals of the type which it has been proven give most gains for food consumed.

How to Produce This Type of Animal

This is an important question, and one that has been taxing the skill of our best breeders for many years. The typical beef steer of today has evolved from the rougher, mixed-bred cattle of ages ago through the persistent, intelligent, systematic efforts of generations of far-seeing stockmen, and we maintain that by careful mating, always using the best pedigreed bulls of individual merit and early maturing strains which you can afford, that your herd will rapidly improve. Such sires impart to their offspring early maturing qualities, and these stand out prominently, above all other sources, as the means of producing juicy, marbled meat, the kind consumers crave and only top-notchers produce. By using, then, the best bulls, combined with judicious, liberal feeding, results will compensate you for the outlay and toil. Many claim it is impossible when purchasing bulls to distinguish the early maturers from others, but we think this idea is largely erroneous. The low-set, blocky type are generally early maturers; then again, bulls are usually purchased before they are full grown, and the pedigree will show their age, so you can tell by size and general appearance if they are rapid developers. Unless they are naturally thick and growthy, showing that they are well advanced for their age, have nothing to do with them. When purchasing bulls, remember you are purchasing them as transmitters of beef qualities, and this will guide you while making selections. Constitution is all important, the vital organs must be strong, and masculinity prominent, for without these they cannot be impressive sires.

Broad, deep bodies, naturally well-coated with flesh, are essential, and long, well-sprung ribs give this formation; these points along with long, deep hindquarters, dare not be overlooked. They must also be good handlers, and should be possessed of an abundant coat of long, fine hair. You can afford to overlook a rather conspicuous, tall head, an unsightly horn, etc., yet, of course, other things being equal, have these minor points as nearly perfect as possible, but never forget that utility in a sire is all essential, and under no circumstance sacrifice it simply because in some trifling detail he does not reach your standard.

Always remember that the sire is at least half of the herd, then you will more likely realize the enormous advantage of having that half, which is embodied in one animal, of the highest possible standard. When the breeding of sire and dam for several generations back are alike uniform on both sides of the genealogical tree, the dam's influence on the offspring is very marked, although not to the same extent as the sire's, but where either one is of mixed breeding, and most cows which produce beef steers are, how extremely important it is that the sire should be not only a splendid specimen of a beef bull, but that his progenitors should also be of an equally high standard, similar in type, and that the mating in each case for at least the last four crosses back would niche well, then when a bull bred in that manner is mated with cows of mixed breeding, his influence is immensely more impressive than the dam's, consequently his prepotency will stamp itself in the offspring to, at least, a three-quarter extent. Individual excellence in a bull is extremely important, yet without good ancestry back of it we have no reasonable assurance that the sire's superior qualities will be handed down as a universal heritage to his numerous progeny. This is where well-mated, pedigreed animals have the advantage, and a great advantage it is. Breeding is merely handing down the merits or demerits of the ancestors.

If your females are a poor class of grades to begin with, and you feel you cannot afford better, yearly cull out a few of the worst, and on no consideration sell cows that produce fairly early maturers; also be slow to part with any of their female progeny.

Abundance of Nutritious Cheap Fodder

Fodder, both appetizing and nutritious, can be grown in abundance in the west, and right here is one spot where a deviation from common practice would be found profitable. The chief fodder used is hay, cut and saved whenever convenient, without any thought as regards nourishment or palatableness. Without nourishment, gains cannot be made, and, unless the food is well saved, animals will not consume it as readily, and it is well known that a large portion of the food consumed is required to maintain animal heat and build up waste tissue. Only what the animal eats in excess of these requirements can be converted into increase of weight. Now if the food is not palatable the animal will not likely eat any more than the needs of the body demand, consequently he is boarding at your expense, whereas you should be receiving profit.

Maintenance Ration

Conditions should be studied to lessen as far as practicable the amount of food which the animal requires for bodily support; this we call "maintenance ration."

Under favorable conditions 80 per cent of maintenance ration is required to keep up the heat of the body, and the 20 per cent for building up waste tissue. Thus we can understand how necessary it is that our cattle should be sheltered during winter storms, for if they are not they simply take what would have been profit and utilize it to assist them in withstanding severe climatic conditions.

Necessary Shelter

Formerly, with the open range, stock could find shelter either in scrub or coulees; now fences frequently debar such protection, and as a more intensive line of farming is beginning to prevail, it stands to reason that better shelter must be provided. Good sheds built in some sheltered spot, open on the least exposed side, with trees planted some little distance from them on every side for additional protection, would prove of great advantage. Suitable tree seedlings can be had through the Forestry Department, Ottawa, without cost, to those who properly prepare the soil for them.

Varied Diet

The value of an article is largely determined by the cost of production, and it has been proven that better health and greater gains accompany a varied diet when feeding cattle.

The cultivated grasses—bromus, timothy, and western rye grass—should be more universally grown; they have been tested and the results are highly satisfactory. Alfalfa, red and alsike clovers should also receive more attention than they are getting. These clovers are giving fair results in some districts, quite sufficient to warrant a more universal sowing; for it is well known they make excellent pasture and good hay. Alfalfa should be cut for hay when one-quarter of the plants are in bloom; if left longer it becomes woody. Without soil inoculation it appears to grow fairly well in several localities where it has been tried in the west; where the soil has been inoculated much better results have been obtained. Begin by sowing on a small scale. Alsike in numerous sections of the west is also doing well, and although not nearly so rank a grower as alfalfa, nor as well adapted for pasture, owing to its light aftermath, it makes first-class hay. Red clover is also giving good returns in many localities.

In addition to cultivated grasses and clovers, oat and wheat sheaves make excellent winter fodder; they are grown at present quite extensively for that purpose. We would advise

growing peas with the oats, for the reason that peas are considered the best grain for finishing beef cattle. Cattle, fed on a part pea meal ration, will handle firmer and stand shipping better than those fed on other grains; yet we do not recommend this sowing of oats and peas mixed, about half and half, and cutting green for fodder. If sown in that proportion there will be considerably more oat than pea plants, owing to the difference in the size of kernels. The crop can be harvested with the binder, if desired. Peas do well throughout the west, so this is not an experiment, although we do not know of peas and oats being grown together for the purpose mentioned.

Every beef cattle man should have a good patch of rape where he can turn his cattle, young things, cows and all, to graze when his common pasture becomes scarce. It is advisable to have a piece of pasture in conjunction with the rape where the stock can get a certain amount of drier food, or else it is likely to scour them severely at first. If a pasture of this kind is not available, hay or straw will answer the same purpose, and, if not any of these substitutes are convenient, it will be found well to only allow the stock short periods on the rape until their digestive organs have become accustomed to the change of food.

Dwarf Essex is the variety to use, and it can be sown either broadcast or in drills. If the land is reasonably free from weeds, sow broadcast, about 3 lbs. of seed per acre. If the land is dirty, or you fear extremely dry weather, sow in drills, using about 3 1/2 lbs. of seed to the acre. The handiest way if you intend sowing in rows is to take your seed drill and securely plug two-thirds of the spouts. This in most cases will leave the rows about 21 inches apart, but anything from 18 to 24 inches is considered suitable. For July or early August feeding it should be sown in May; if for later feeding, sow in June. A good plan would be to sow at intervals two weeks apart, perhaps three sowings. Rape is also suitable for late fall and early winter feeding.

There is always quite a percentage of inferior grains that it is well to feed on the farm; in fact, as a rule it pays best to feed all coarse or secondary grades of grain, selling only, as grain, that which commands seed prices, and wheat for flour. This inferior grain should be fed as chop to calves and export steers.

There is no doubt but that the first twelve months of the animals' life is the most important period, and the old adage applies here with peculiar force "Well begun half done." It has been demonstrated time and again, at numerous experiment stations, that at no period in an animal's life can such cheap gains be made as during the first year. The younger the animal the greater its ability to digest in proportion to its live weight. The approximate rates from numbers of experiments show that as 3, 7 and 12 stand in relation to each other, so is the cost of grain in cattle, first, second and third year.

The point is, keep the young things growing, and, as previously stated, it is only what they digest in addition to their maintenance ration that can be used for increase of weight. What flesh an animal loses in winter, whether through cold or scarcity of food, must be built up a second time (by food), and that is a direct loss to the producer, for he has twice to manufacture, if you will permit the term, that for which he will only be paid once. Judicious feeding, with fair shelter, and good sires, can save one year from the average time required to fit for export under former range conditions. That means a great saving of feed, also much less capital involved, through saving of holding over an extra year, and in addition it is catering for export trade which was never previously done.

Top-notchers are always in demand at the leading markets at fair returns for labor and outlay.

FEEDING FOR PROFIT

The right proportion of food for laying hens can be scientifically ascertained, but the relative question of the cost of different foods must also enter into the consideration. According to some authorities, fowls should receive about 60 per cent of grain, 15 per cent of flesh, and 25 per cent of vegetables, says an exchange. This proportion is not absolute, but relative. It serves more as a guide to the poultryman than as an infallible rule. Now the question of grain must be decided according to the locality and cost of the various grains. Where beans or peas can be obtained cheaper than grains, they take the place of the latter very acceptably, if ground and fed in an attractive form. Ground beans or peas, mixed with corn meal and bran, produce very desirable results. In the wheat-growing sections that cereal is the best and cheapest to feed, as there is no feed better for egg-laying. Oats is a food that is not fed sufficiently to poultry. If more oats were fed, there would be lots more eggs and healthier stock. Corn, we know, has the greatest amount of fat-producing material, and oats more muscle-forming material. Beans, however, exceed any of the grains in muscle-forming materials, containing 38 per cent, compared to 22 per cent in oats. Lately, the writer has been feeding quite a quantity of Kafir corn, both to the old fowls and chicks, and find it wholesome and cheap.

POULTRY NOTES

For success in the poultry business it is just as necessary for a man to hold his temper as it is for an incubator to hold its temperature. The four signs that point to success are grit, pluck, energy and perseverance. Pluck wins. A lazy man will have lazy fowls. A good poultryman never gets the "blues."

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company; John T. Heffer-
ret, G. Griggs, Walter Oakes,
S. Gibson and others. Charles
and Capt. J. S. Gibson
managing owners.

Her History
Verrett G. Griggs came to Vic-
torian and in distress. She
German bark Columbia, and
from Kobe to Royal Roads
in a heavy gale and Capt.
was engaging in setting
messages attached to kites
the hope that they would
over-thinking there was no
escaping shipwreck and
on the Vancouver Island
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fates, outboard from Victoria
ber piled high on her turret
the distressed vessel and
to Victoria thereby earning
large money. The Colum-
Bismarck for some months
05 was sold, being bought in
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SERVICE GULF ISLANDS

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From Victoria to Set-
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American Federation of
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the switchmen's strike.