

## Garden and Orchard.

## Potted Strawberry Plants.

As strawberry culture increases among the people, we find increasing mention of potted plants. Such plants seem to be largely in demand in the States, and during the past three years have been making their appearance in increasing numbers in Canada, so that an important question in the minds of many lovers of this choicest of small fruits is, What is the nature and real value of potted plants?

The mode of propagation is simple enough, though somewhat tedious. As good strong plants that have been on the ground some time begin to throw out vigorous runners in June, the nurseryman fills three-inch pots with rich soil and sinks them in the ground within eight or ten inches of the old plant which is sending out the runners. The tip of each runner is then placed on the surface of the soil in the pot, and held in place by a small pebble; then as the tip of the runner expands into a cluster of leaves, a mass of root fibres extend downward into the soil in the pot and in from two to four weeks, if enough moisture is supplied, each pot contains a young plant sufficiently developed to be separated from the parent and transplanted to set up an independent existence. The chief trouble in this process is to keep up the supply of moisture. It is for this reason that the pots are sunk into the ground, as the little handful of soil that a three-inch pot can hold would soon dry out if the hot July atmosphere could get a chance at evaporation all around, even the outside of the pot. But with frequent watering a potted plant comes to possess great vitality. As a rule the plant should not be disturbed till it has made at least four leaves, and then on "tilting" it out of the pot a mass of root fibres is seen that always surprises a person who is familiar with only the common layer plants: the strong, white, twine-like roots circle round and round the little ball of earth, sending out branches here and there into the centre of the mass, and binding it so firmly together that it may be tossed from hand to hand around a room without losing any soil except a little from the topmost roots. These plants after removal from the pots, are packed in an upright position in shallow boxes, with damp moss beneath, around and above the combined ball of earth and roots, and in this state, with the tops exposed to the air, they will travel two weeks in an ordinary express car, and be in good condition to grow on being planted.

Such are the potted plants of growing horticultural fame.

Of course, layer plants, if set out in April, will bear a few little specimens, perhaps three or four each without serious injury to the plant; if set out early in the previous September they may even average from half-a-dozen to a dozen on each plant, and of larger size. But compare such handfuns with the rich yield

of a pint to the plant which may be grown on potted plants.

Another great advantage of potted plants to many persons is found in the testing of new varieties. The flattering descriptions of new varieties by their introducers are not sound enough evidence for the public. A trial with potted plants will give a test of the variety in midsummer of 1885, while with ordinary plants set next fall or spring nothing final can be known till midsummer of '86.

Winter protection is necessary for potted plants—just as necessary as it is with plantings of the previous spring if kept in hills. The "hill system" is wrongly named: there must be no hilling, but only keeping the runners cut off, in which case the plants grow into veritable little hills of verdure.

## Thinning Fruit.

Next to good cultivation, nothing contributes more to bring out the excellent qualities of

far less time, and while his fine crop sold readily at a dollar and a half per basket, has neighbor, who did not practice thinning, found it difficult to sell his for thirty-seven or fifty cents.

President Wilder said, in an address before the American Pomological Society:—"One of the best cultivators in the vicinity of Boston has reduced his theory to practice, with the happiest effect, in the cultivation of the pear. He produces every year superior fruit, which commands the highest price. Some have doubted whether this practice can be made remunerative, except in its application to the finer fruits. But another cultivator, who raises an annual crop of the best apples, assures us that the secret of his success is the thinning of the fruit, and he has no doubt of the economy of the practice."

Apples and pears, when half grown, will show any defects or injuries from insects. In thinning the fruit these defective specimens should, in all cases, be removed. As many bushels of good fruit will be obtained from the trees in autumn, as there would have been of good and bad mixed together, had all been left to grow. The labor of assorting will be lessened, and the fruit bring a higher price in market. An experienced orchardist says that one day's work to fifty barrels of apples will thus take out nearly all the imperfect fruit; while the increased labor of hand-picking so many poor specimens, will be as great as taking them off in summer, when less care will be required with them.

## Pruning the Quince.

The total neglect of the cultivation of the quince by many who have planted them has resulted in their dwarfish and stunted growth and entire unproductiveness. To renovate such trees, cut or saw out the thick profusion of suckers which surround the stem. In many instances young quince trees, as sold by the nursery men, have received no pruning or training. To give them a straight stem and to impart sufficient vigor to form a well balanced head, such trees should be cut down near the ground as soon as well established, and a single upright shoot allowed to grow for the future tree. The next year a good head may be commenced similar to that of a dwarf apple tree.

**BLACK KNOT.**—A man in Barrie has been in court for refusing to move certain plum trees which were affected with black knot. The law in the case was hunted up, and it was found that the Act could not be enforced because of the neglect of the local Council in failing to appoint a proper inspector. The case was dismissed.

Brains are to be extolled at all seasons, but in the harvest time they must be supplemented with plenty of muscle.

Now expect a visit from your city cousins, but don't let them arrange your programme for the month.



POTTED STRAWBERRY PLANT.