

HORTICULTURE.

CURRENT CULTURE FOR PROFIT.

(Continued from last week.)

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Current Enemies.—In our last article we advised current growers to be most vigilant this season of the year against the imported Gooseberry Saw-fly, which was introduced from Europe about twenty years ago, and has now spread over Canada to the United States until it has become the worst enemy of the currant grower. There is another worm very active upon currant bushes in the month of June, the *Curculio Geomider* or measuring worm (*Curculio Ribesii*) the larva of a pale yellow moth with dusky spots. It may easily be identified by its peculiar mode of walking as if measuring distances. Its body is about an inch long and its feet are at each end. Its color is whitish black spots, and a long yellow stripe down its back. It does not feed in groups like the Saw fly but scattered over the leaves. Jarring will cause these worms to fall down by the silken threads which they spin, when they may be easily gathered and killed. Or, if very numerous, hellebore should be sprinkled over the foliage as described in our last article.

The other of the insect enemies of the currant should be noticed here, viz: *The Currant Borer* (*Aegeria Tipuli* Forsk.). Just about this season of the year a moth somewhat resembling a wasp is noticed, having a bluish black body with several gold stripes and transparent wings. This is the parent of the currant borer, a grub which bores up and down through the centre of the stem. Its presence may be detected by the unthrifty look of the foliage and small size of the fruit. Foliage thus affected should be cut off, and the tree cut up at once with their inhabitants. Vigorous growth of the bushes will tend to lessen the ravages of the insects, and to note this it is wise to cut out each branch but five or six stems, and to keep well cut back.

Marketing Currants.—Few, except professional horticulturists and market gardeners, sufficiently value the advantages derived by the use of tidy packages in the marketing of fruit. In our city and town markets may still be seen currants and other fruits exposed for sale in weather-beaten boxes, tin pails, or rough, dirty crates. No wonder people who do this to their small, badly handled currants of various varieties should declare them a profitless fruit.

After trying many packages for currants I find nothing so satisfactory as the common square strawberry basket, twenty-four which are packed for shipment in a wooden crate of the same material, with a lid and cover. These are all sold with the fruit and never returned, fortunately making it necessary for the grower always to use new and clean packages. At Grimsby this basket crate has almost wholly displaced the wooden crate, which had to be returned and which so soon became shabby and dilapidated. Economy as well as convenience has forced the change. For shipping purposes, for the weight of the old wooden crate added to the express charges a sum nearly equalling the price of the basket crate.

We are of the opinion that any farmer giving the attention we have described to the selection and cultivation of his currants will reap great satisfaction in an abundance of beautiful fruit for his table, and if

he choose to grow it for market, he will receive a sure reward of his labor.

STRAWBERRY CULTURE.

Mr. Page wrote some very sensible things in the *CANADIAN FARMER* of June 11th, on this subject. The hint about the selection of soil is important. It has been proved by the sad experience of many, that a dry soil will result in failure. And the cultivation and manuring needs emphasizing. Our gardener said the other day, "the old way of growing berries is played out," and he was about right, as any one seeing the magnificent results he has brought about by high culture would acknowledge. He gathered this season in one picking four hundred quarts of magnificent berries from half an acre of ground, and that repeated every other day several times. Nor is that all the story, for on account of their fine size they sold in the market at from two to five cents in advance of ordinary berries, thus amply rewarding all expenditure. Evidently the old process is not out of date yet, "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," and we might add "very well" in strawberry culture. Every additional stroke of the hoe, and every round with the cultivator, more than seems absolutely necessary, before or after picking season is additional money in the pocket.

A most important point in Mr. Page's letter was perhaps on the selection of varieties. With some varieties no amount of culture will pay. We had half an acre of Harvey's Seedling once which was the admiration of every visitor—such beautiful plants—and we hoped great things. But they had one very serious fault—they bore no fruit! Perhaps it was the soil; perhaps because there were not enough hermaphrodites planted near, but any way, they never paid for the planting.

The Wilson never disappoints anyone who gets it unmixed with other kinds, and it still stands out beyond comparison for main crop with any other variety, unless perhaps it may be the Crescent Seedling.

In the last report of the Fruit Grower's Association of Ontario there is an account of an interesting discussion on the subject of varieties of strawberries. The selection of kinds for profit was narrowed down still closer than Mr. Page has done. The sense of the meeting was in favor of only two kinds for profit, viz the Wilson and Crescent seedling.

The James Vick has come out with wonderful commendations, as surpassing the Wilson in productiveness. We have it just now fruiting, and so far it appears appears inferior to the Wilson in size and flavor, and not more productive.

But surely the quantity of fruit is not always to be our criterion for judging of the merits of strawberries, or of any other fruit. As our cities advance in wealth and luxury, there will be an increased demand for excellence in flavor and beauty of appearance at any price. The old *Triomphe de Gand* may yet come to the front as the choicest and most popular table berry, and be grown with great profit on rich, heavy soil. The Sharpless brings a high price on account of its size and beauty of appearance. With us it is yielding very well this season and we would not be without it.

Picking.—We fear growers as a rule will never learn to gather strawberries with care. Canadians are generally in too much of a hurry to do it with care. In farming and

fruit growing the same rule prevails, viz: "get as much as possible off as much ground as possible, with as little work as possible," and it proves in the end a most unfortunate rule.

How hard it is for a careful grower to get careful pickers! "Oh yes," says one, "I can see it is best to pick them as you wish, but then I can't make enough doing it that way," and so they grab the beautiful berries by handfuls and toss them into the baskets. Sadly bruised and stemless they come into the packing house, where to make them at all presentable they are topped to deceive the buyer.

Strawberries should be picked with short stems about half an inch long, nipping them off with the thumb nail. They should be handled by these stems only and carefully laid in the basket so as not to need turning out and handling over again to the dusting of their shiny gloss. Berries so gathered and put in good hands for sale will bring two or three cents in advance of those picked in a careless way.

The best package is the one recommended for currants; no other is so acceptable in the market. We believe the time will come when it will pay to stencil each package with the kind of berry, and when such delicious dessert berries as the *Triomphe* will from name, command remunerative prices in our best markets.

THE PEACH.

The peach is one of the most delicious fruits grown in a temperate climate, and whenever it succeeds its cultivation yields a larger net return than perhaps any other fruit—every succeeding year affords evidence that it may be successfully grown in many localities where heretofore it was supposed such an undertaking would result in failure.

Being a native of a warmer climate than ours, it is often injured by the intense cold of winter. It is therefore advisable to fortify the tree in every possible way against the rigors of our northern climate. This precaution is the first step toward success, and in many localities is imperative.

Several factors will enter into the account in securing this result. First—the site for the orchard should be elevated above the lands adjacent, and the surface should incline considerably in order to secure perfect drainage for excess of water and cold air. The cold air being heavier than warm air will run off, if the surface is descending, and will occupy the lowest level the same as water; for this reason, among others, peaches will not succeed on low ground, nor even on high land if the surface is a dead level for some distance around.

For the same reasons, all depressions having no outlet should be avoided. Neither will a peach orchard succeed on heavy clay soil when the subsoil retains an excess of water, unless very thoroughly underdrained and the subsoil broken up. If it becomes again apparently compact, the roots will be enabled to penetrate such soil far more readily than they could before it was broken up.

It is known that the roots of the peach tree have less power to penetrate the hard earth than those of many other fruit trees, and require a loose, friable soil and subsoil. Such a condition of the soil allows the water to pass off readily and admits light and heat, both important agents in vegetable growth.

The best soil for the peach is a deep, strong, gravelly loam or a heavy loam with

a porous subsoil. Sandy land is preferable to heavy clay, and with the use of fertilizers will produce fruit of excellent quality and in reasonable abundance.

As an incentive to a thorough preparation of the earth before planting out the orchard and of the most prompt and thorough cultivation afterward, we may say that an acre of land adapted to and thoroughly prepared for growing peaches, will produce a net income equal to three or four acres devoted to farm crops, and on sandy land the peach orchard will show a still larger balance in its favor.

Farmers too often seem satisfied with shallow cultivation, and their crops usually correspond with the labor and skill used in conducting their farm operations. Now, while the ordinary returns from farming may not warrant the expense of fertilizing, underdraining, and subsoiling, to the extent I have indicated, the case is far different in laying a sure foundation for a profitable peach orchard.

The usual depth of plowing is six inches—the subsoil below that distance is of little benefit to growing crops unless the roots can penetrate through it. If the bed of mellow earth can be made one foot deep instead of six inches, the productive capacity of the orchard will be increased in the same ratio.

The benefits secured by a thorough breaking up of the soil to a proper depth may be stated as follows: Air, light and heat, indispensable agents in growing fruit and all farm crops, are more freely admitted to the whole depth of soil to work out these wonderful changes which produce such abundant and beautiful crops of fruit and grain. The air brings with it elements of fertility, heat from the sun's rays and is laden with moisture. It yields up a portion of its heat as it penetrates the cool earth; this cooling process lessens its capacity to hold moisture and a portion of this is also given up to the earth. This will explain why a deep, mellow soil will carry a crop of fruit through a severe drought so much better than a shallow one. A deep, mellow bed of earth will also retain a greater amount of rain water without displacing other agencies required to carry on vegetable growth.

During very dry weather the fruits growing on the shallow soils are pinched and shriveled and often become entirely worthless, while a deep soil yields up the moisture it has held in store to the multitude of roots which fill the ground. The fruit swells, and grows in size and beauty, and gladdens the heart of the owner in the prospect of an abundant harvest. While the one must offer a small measure of lean, inferior fruit, the other is blessed with an abundant yield of beautiful fruit which is in demand at the highest prices.

It is very true that in many sections the growing of peaches has proved a very profitable business, where the orchards have been set out on land prepared as for ordinary farm crops, and the orchard has received only the most primitive cultivation; but there is no doubt that these same orchards would have nearly doubled their yield of fruit had they received generous care and cultivation.

In selecting a location for an orchard it is well to keep in mind that the nearer the soil meets these requirements in its natural state the less expense will be required in its preparation.

Peaches being perishable and delicate fruit, it is important that they be handled with the greatest care and reach a market in the least possible time, in order to bring the best price.