

GOOSEBERRIES FOR PROFIT.



ANY of your readers at all acquainted with our local fruit markets will not deny that the supply of gooseberries is by no means equal to the demand; and that for those who can command a suitable soil and location, a sure and liberal profit can be realized, at a very moderate outlay of money, time and labor, by their cultivation.

The soil best suited to gooseberry growing has been found to be thoroughly drained, rich, and deeply worked clay loam. These qualities of soil are imperative, as the plant is very impatient, either of excessive dryness or heat. This is the only cause why success with it is at all uncertain. Therefore, with a moderate protection from dryness and heat, the success of gooseberry culture may be looked upon as assured.

To secure these conditions, location must be skillfully used. The plants should be two years old, strong and well rooted, and, if carefully planted, their after growth will be rapid. The ground should be well prepared and marked off in lines four feet apart each way. Thus planting at the intersection of each line makes 2,275 plants to the acre, and will give satisfaction to the workers and pickers, and form a fine plantation after the first year's growth. The ground must be stirred by means of a one horse cultivator, between the rows both ways, and not a weed allowed to be seen. Thus treated, the young bushes make extraordinary growth of wood and the set of fruit buds will be astonishing, repaying all the care bestowed on them. Of course in gooseberry growing, as in every other kind of fruit culture, if one would wish to reap the highest results, increasing vigilance and constant application must be certainly and freely given.

The annual pruning consists of shortening the summer's growth to a moderate extent, and thinning out the crowded shoots. This operation is best done (though very often neglected) in the early summer, as the growth of wood and fruit buds, on that which is left, will be so much better and more encouraging to the grower. After the wood has borne fruit for three or four years, and becomes somewhat old and feeble, cut it entirely out, and encourage young growth in its place. This renewing is very important to all pruning for fruitfulness. I have known a gooseberry plantation to remain profitable for twenty years and over, by proper attention to pruning and cultivation, but at the same time I am no advocate for this kind of thing; as I believe the best results come from young and vigorous plants, as in other fruits, and would advise changing the plantation after ten years' service, as young plants are produced so cheaply that there is no economy in running a plantation after its prime is passed.

The ordinary enemies of the gooseberry are insects, mildews and blights.