

## ORCHARD-HOUSE FRUIT CULTURE.

By Mr. G. Vair.

The cultivation of fruit trees in pots and tubs has engaged the attention of many, and that more particularly in the last six or seven years, and it now has been proved without a doubt that in Canada fine peaches, apricots, nectarines and pears may be grown by the above system without any great amount of practical or scientific skill. For the successful carrying out of this very important system of fruit culture the public are indebted chiefly, if not entirely to Mr. Thomas Rivers, Nurseryman, Sawbridge-worth, England. That the system has many advantages cannot be denied, enabling the grower to have fine fruit at a very early season of the year, by the application of artificial heat or even without it. In this rigorous climate of Canada, (I speak more especially of the vicinity of Toronto), the cultivation of the peach has defied the most careful and experienced, and I have no hesitation in saying, that the above system is just the thing that was wanted. This is evinced by the many structures that have been erected within the last five years in the City of Toronto, and other places throughout Canada and the States. I regret that this important subject has fallen on me to speak upon, as I would have gladly listened to some one or other of the many competent persons composing the society. I will preface my remarks by briefly stating my small experience in the matter.

As to the best kind of House for the purpose; they may be of any size, according to the mind or will of the owner. I would recommend that the building stand north and south and span roofed, thereby admitting light and air on all sides.

With regard to the kind of trees to be grown I would recommend that where the houses appropriated for that purpose are large, a portion of the trees be grafted on their own roots, placing them in tubs and plunging up to the rim. The sort I mean to be so treated are peaches and nectarines, thereby making pretty large trees that will bear a considerable quantity of fruit. Of course they will not come into bearing so soon as those that are grafted upon the plum, of which three parts of the whole ought to be, they fruit early, grow dwarf and bushy, and will not take up a great deal of space. Nurserymen using the plum ought to be very careful in choosing none but the most healthy and vigorous. If not healthy they will not be found to do, so well as the stock does not grow so fast as the head. I think it commendable for parties that grow largely that they ought to have some young stock on hand, thereby replacing any sickly or exhausted tree which ought not to be permitted to remain in the house at all.

I will now make a few remarks on the system of potting, soil, watering, ripening of the core, &c. I do not think it necessary to have them in large pots. The best peaches I had last year

were grown in nine and ten inch pots, and the of excellent size and flavour. They may be shifted into a large size if you want large plants. But the purpose I take to be not to have the trees larger than can be placed on the dining room table without inconvenience. The soil use is a good turf loam, rather approaching to clay and sand, a few crushed bones, charcoal and a little well rotted heated manure. This pack in around the plant very firmly with a dull pointed stick; this I think a good plan. Previous to starting the trees in spring, I procure a box or large tub, taking some sheep dung, and old hot-bed or cow dung, and mix all up together with soft rain water, I then immerse the pot or tub in this mixture, leaving them until thoroughly soaked through, then put them in the place to grow, again mulching the pot with some well-rotted manure to keep the sun from penetrating too far—the tree being now leafless. This will keep the soil moist for some time, the less water they get the better until they start, as it only tends to exhaust and wash out the mixture given previously. The thermometer may stand about forty to forty five at night for some time, and as they begin to swell that may rise to fifty or fifty-five. They ought to be mulched frequently during the growing season, but this should be discontinued entirely when the fruit approaches maturity, as it will only tend to vitiate the flavour. They ought to be pinched back two or three times during the season to make them bushy, and likewise concentrate the fruit buds for the next year.

When the fruit is pinched the trees may be placed outside under the influence of the sun and air when they will be found to mature much quicker—I mean the ripening of the wood. Syringing ought not to be neglected for a single night during the growing season, except when in blossom, as they are almost sure to get red spider, and if these once get numerous they are difficult to overcome. The peach is subject to the borer in the house, as well as in the garden or orchard. I examine frequently at the base of the stem, and if the borer is found I clean and pare out the wound with a sharp pointed instrument and stop with grafted wax. The most commendable fruits for orchard house culture are, first the peach, second the apricot, third the nectarine. Pears I do not think are worth troubling with, except it be a few early sorts. Cherries are not adapted for the orchard house, as they seldom set well indoors in this locality. The following sorts I have found to do well.

1. PEACHES: *Coolridge Favourite, Early York, Crawford, Large York, Morris White, Noblesse Barrington, Royal George, Kensington, Mixen Freestone.*
2. NECTARINES: *Stanwick, Downton.*
3. APRICOTS: *Moorpark, Early Golden Red Masculine.*