

WAYS TO PREVENT MICE INJURING ORCHARD TREES

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DEPREDATIONS by mice in winter are usually greatest when the orchard is in sod and when there is rubbish lying about; hence the latter should be removed before the winter sets in. In most cases it is not necessary nor advisable to have the orchard in sod, particularly when there are young trees, although it is highly important to have a cover crop which is also sometimes a harbour for mice.

As mice may be expected every winter in greater or less numbers, young trees should be regularly protected against their ravages. Mice usually begin working on the ground under the snow and when they come to a tree they will begin to gnaw it if it is not protected. A small mound of soil from 8 to 12 inches high packed around the tree will often turn them, and even snow tramped about the tree has been quite effectual.

The cheapest and surest practise is to wrap the trees with ordinary building paper, the price of which need not be taken into consideration as it is so little. Tar paper is also effectual, but trees have been injured by using it and it is well to guard against

danger. A little earth should be put about the lower end to prevent the mice from beginning to work there.

At the Experimental Farm we are using in addition to building paper, a wooden veneer which has been found very satisfactory both in protecting the trees from mice and from sunscald. Prof. W. B. Atwood, Horticulturist, Virginia Experimental Station, recommends a mixture of pure linseed oil and white lead to prevent the depredations of mice on apple trees, but does not recommend it except with caution for peach and cherry trees. He says that with 15 years' experience he has never had an apple tree injured by this application.

It is important to buy the white lead and pure linseed oil and mix them, as ready-made paints may have an injurious mineral oil in them. Prof. Atwood advises mixing the white paint and linseed oil to a consistency the same as for an outside coat on a building, and to put a heavy coat on the tree. He claims that once in two years is sufficient to apply. It is also useful in preventing borers. The mixture has been known to injure cherry and peach trees.

DOES CULTIVATION CAUSE APPLE SCAB?

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I WANT to take issue with Mr. A. W. Peart, in his statement in a recent issue of *The Horticulturist*, that clean cultivation in the orchard promotes scab. He is quoted as saying "If anything green is on the soil it has a neutralizing effect on vapors arising from the soil, which tend to promote scab. I think the finest lot of apples sent to the Old Country last year came from an orchard which had been in oats, etc."

In the first place, Nature is so versatile and variable, that the close observer

would consider it ridiculous to take one or two of her results and found a theory or law upon it. Some dozen other circumstances may have combined to make that coated orchard yield fine fruit, and since the oats were there, they were hit upon as the cause, when they may have had no effect on the result. This is just to show that too many of us are prone to jump to conclusions.

My knowledge of soil physics tells me that dry earth, such as the mulch formed by clean cultivation, absorbs noxious matter