

Peach Crop Injured

The reports, as published in The Canadian Horticulturist and elsewhere, that the peach crop of the Niagara District had been seriously injured by the cold weather last winter led Dominion Fruit Commissioner D. Johnson to send a representative to the Niagara District to investigate conditions. It was found that throughout the Niagara District the situation is a serious one. It is safe to predict that the crop of commercial peaches will be the lightest that has been harvested in twenty-five years.

Following mild weather during December and the earlier part of January, the temperature dropped on January 13 and 14 to between nine and eighteen degrees below zero, depending on the location, and was followed one month later by a similar cold period. The January frost was the cause of most of the injury, since a number of the buds had swollen during the previous six weeks. The cold spell in February also did damage. Throughout the Niagara peninsula the peach buds were greatly injured.

In some orchards not a live bud could be found, and where there were any live buds they were on trees of no commercial value, or trees which had been protected to some extent from frost by proximity to water. Along the shores of Lake Ontario, between Winona and Jordan, there was a scattering of buds on Triumphs and Longhursts. At Queenston on the Niagara River, a few buds were found on Englo's Mammoth and Triumph. In several orchards live buds of white flesh sorts were found, usually on the upper branches, and never more than a dozen on a tree. There is no section in which the injury was not great. More good buds were seen at Queenston than at any other point in the peninsula, and even there the number was so small that the amount of fruit produced will necessarily be very slight.

There are certain features that are worthy of consideration, inasmuch as they are the only ones upon which to base the probability that there will be a few peaches. The most important one is the development of retarded fruit buds. A comparatively large number of very small buds were found at several points throughout the district. These, on account of their size, were not so greatly affected by the extreme fluctuations in temperature. At the time of inspection they were still small, but there is some likelihood that a percentage of them will later develop and blossom, in that they do not show the dark centre which is characteristic of the larger and frozen buds.

In the second place, there are many orchards which are within a very short distance of either Lake Ontario or the Niagara River, and on account of the protection which they received from frost through more equable temperature, were found to bear a scattering of live buds. Only a few of these orchards were examined, and the conditions found in them must apply to other orchards in which conditions may be as good or even better than in those inspected.

Thirdly, it was noted that in cases where any buds had survived the winter, they were more often located in the upper branches of the tree than in the lower limbs. The tendency of frost is to settle, and in some cases a difference of from three to five degrees in temperature is noted between the ground level and a point fifteen feet higher. It is possible, then, that

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