

by severing such branches as cross or rub against others, and such, as in your opinion, may afterwards require removal; as branches cut out while small will readily heal over, whereas, if left to grow until they become large, cutting them, then will very much injure the tree — By judicious pruning we have more thrifty trees, larger foliage, and larger and finer fruit, and the sun and air are admitted into the top to improve and perfect the crop.

A great deal has been said and written about the proper time for pruning, a great part of which is mere theory. Many prune in the Winter and Spring, from custom, and others in June, because the wound heals quickly, not reflecting that it is of more importance that the wound heal soundly, than quickly. We give directions according to our experience for twenty years. The removal of small limbs may be performed when most convenient at any season.—February, March or April we believe to be the best season for pruning, the wood will become hard, sound and well seasoned, soon healing over, and remaining in a healthy state.—*Exchange*.

### THE MELON. (1)

The aroma and flavour of this fruit have caused it to be propagated and to be in great demand in all parts of the globe. In warm countries, its quality is always superior. It is therefore necessary to give it the warmest exposure, and to protect it against cold winds, which are as injurious to its quality as to its vegetative power.

#### CULTIVATION.

The melon may be cultivated in two different ways, under glass, in a hot bed; and in a cold frame, in the open air. In a hot bed, the seed may be sown from the 15th of March, to the 15th of April, either directly in the bed or, what is better, in pots of from 2½ to 3 inches, putting 7 or 8 seeds in each pot. These pots should be entirely buried in the bed and placed in the centre, the temperature there being always more even. When the seeds are sown in the bed, they should be put about three inches apart; the earth should be rich, but light: a mixture of leaf mould and well rotted turfy loam is still better. The lights should be kept closed and well covered over until the seed is up. The plants must be allowed gradually to see day light, and, should the heat be very great, the lights must be raised one or two inches from the top. Should two plants grow together, one must be pulled up, leaving the stronger. The bed should be surrounded with hot manure, so as to preserve the heat in the bed at all times. When the seeds are well up, fresh hot beds must be made, into which the plants should be finally transferred. The first beds would by that time have become too cold for active vegetation. Care should be taken to remove a lump of mould with the plant, so as to save the delicate roots from being crushed. When sown in pots, the transplantation is much easier and more effective. In both cases the earth round the plants should be thoroughly saturated with water, so that the mould will adhere to the roots. For two days after transplanting, the beds should be kept closed and partly covered over, so as to insure the taking root of the plant, and to prevent it from wilting. After this the bed must be uncovered every morning, and the lights raised whenever the sun is very hot, until the weather gets so warm that the lights may be removed entirely. As long as the cold weather lasts, the beds must be covered up at night, and in

(1) Our regular French contributor, Mr. Cochois, sends us this paper, which, by request, he prepared for the next report of the Montreal Horticultural Society. We have translated it and publish it as an advanced sheet of this report, which promises to be very valuable.

bad weather, either with straw mats, or with old carpets. Straw mats are the most convenient, and they can be made with ease. Only 3 or 4 plants should be left at last in each pot.

#### MELONS GROWN WITHOUT HOT BEDS.

For these, beds should be dug two feet broad, and from 6 to 8 inches deep, which should be filled with any kind of manure, leaves &c., the manure rising from two to three inches above the level of the earth, and covered over with about four inches of rich vegetable mould. On these beds, plants can be set out, but not before the 15th of June, or seed can be sown, whenever the ground is thoroughly warmed, which, in the district of Quebec, hardly occurs before the end of May, and sometimes as late as the 15th of June. The seed must be covered over about one inch, putting 10 or 12 seeds to each hill, and leaving a space of about four feet between the hills. When the plants are well up and the first nipping or pruning becomes necessary, all useless plants should be removed altogether, after selecting the best 3 or 4 for growth.

#### NIPPING AND PRUNING MELONS.

As soon as the melon has developed its third leaf, the plant should be nipped right over the second leaf, in order to bring out the two lateral branches, often the second leaves, or *cotyledons*, appear at the same time; they should be removed with the point of a pen-knife. The lateral branches should be nipped at the fourth leaf, when the fruit begins to form. After this stage no further pruning should be attempted, as this would cause the fruit to drop.

As soon as the fruit is well knotted and about the size of an apple, two or three melons only should be left on each plant, according to its strength of vegetation. At this stage, pruning becomes necessary; this consists in the removal of the rejected fruit and of such branches as are useless, and would live at the expense of the fruit. From this time, care must be taken that no new fruit be allowed to grow, as it would not mature, and would take from the strength of those already formed. It takes from six to seven weeks, in Canada, for melons to arrive at full maturity. This fruit should be allowed to drop from the vines before being eaten, and not broken off. The reason why so many melons, purchased on our markets, are of inferior quality is that they are broken off, from eight to twelve days before they are ripe.

#### WATERING.

On the hot bed, and as long as the plants are young, watering should be done in the morning only, between eight and ten o'clock. A small quantity only of water should be used, and it should not be cold, but of the temperature of the hot bed, as near as can be. When the weather is damp, or rainy, watering should be omitted. When the hot weather has set in, watering should not take place before four in the afternoon; from six to eight o'clock is still better. The water should be drawn before hand and exposed to the sun, so that it may be warmed; the water should be applied round the stem and not over it, as it might cause the plant to rot. A small quantity of liquid manure, mixed with the water, has an excellent effect.

For melons grown without glass, it is better, in most cases, not to water at all. However, when the plant is young, especially if it has been transplanted, a little watering is necessary, should the weather be very dry. After the plant has been pruned the second time, watering is entirely useless.

E. COCHOIS.

Spencer Wood.

We should, we must say, prefer gathering the melons, say 3 days before they are dead ripe, and placing them in a sunny window. Ed.