

VICTORIA CITY VANCOUVER ISLAND

CANADA'S GATEWAY TO THE ORIENT

THAT most delicious and wholesome of all fruits, the strawberry, bids fair to challenge the supremacy of climate and scenery as factors responsible for the fame of Vancouver Island. In no part of the world does the luscious red berry grow in such abundance and quality, and as the present season has witnessed the shattering of all crop records on Vancouver Island it is fitting that a reference should be made to the growth and expansion of this branch of the fruit-growing industry in Victoria and adjacent districts. In the accompanying photographs are shown views of the strawberry in

the local growers have a great advantage in respect to market.

The acreage devoted to the cultivation of strawberries in the vicinity of Victoria in the past two years has about doubled, so it is said, and if, at this season of the year, when the season is at its height, one can visit almost any of the outlying sections he will observe on every hand beds varying in area devoted to the culture of this beautiful and profitable fruit.

Some little time ago Mr. Rowland Machin, late inspector of the Horticulture Board of California, and former president of the Board of Horticulture of Santa Barbara, California, had this to say about the cultivation

strawberries, 12,556 pounds, for which he obtained \$1,365.10, less 10 per cent. for marketing, or over \$800 per acre—this crop was harvested from one, two and three years old vines.

Grower B delivered from less than four acres of one, two and three year old vines, 28,126 pounds for which he obtained \$2,887, less 10 per cent. per acre for selling, or over \$700 per acre.

Grower C delivered from half an acre, 2,826 pounds for which he received \$301, less 10

we have discarded all except Sharpless for local market and Magoon for shipping. If confined to one variety, would select Magoon; it is the variety that is to bring fame yet unknown to Southern Vancouver Island growers. Under proper conditions of handling, this variety will stand up in perfect condition for a period of nine to ten days; it far exceeds the Clark's Seedling or the famous Hood River berry, as tested here. Fall planting has been tried two different seasons, with exactly the same results. We have come to the conclu-

in the morning nail the tops on crate, and deliver for shipping before the heat of the day has advanced. If handled in this way and the berries kept in a cool place constantly, Magoons will be in good condition nine days from time of picking.

A. E. Gale, Victoria: I find the Improved Sharpless does best with me, either for home use or local market, but for shipping, the Magoon is the best we have tried so far. We plant in the fall, in October, if the ground is well drained, or in the spring, in April, as soon as the ground is dry enough to work. We plant in rows 3 feet apart and 18 inches apart in the row. Keep all runners cut off and pick off all bloom from spring planting. We keep horse cultivator going at frequent intervals to

Vancouver Island Strawberries



PICKING THE BERRIES



On the Vine

three stages—in the field, on the vine and boxed ready to be placed before the housekeeper. The view showing a field of strawberries was kindly furnished the Colonist by Mr. Charles Minor, who took the picture on the strawberry farm of Louis Keating, Richmond Valley.

It is declared by those who know whereof they speak that the climate of Vancouver Island, especially in the vicinity of Victoria, is perfect for the production of this fruit in its grandest form, color and weight, though on some sections of the Lower Mainland, some remarkable achievements with the popular berry are recorded.

But it is for size and quality that Vancouver Island excels. A look into any of the grocers' shop windows of Victoria at the present time will indicate the truth of this statement. As the berries grown on this Island are at least two weeks earlier than those of any other portion of the province it is clear that

of the strawberry on Vancouver Island:

"The writer has from early boyhood keenly enjoyed the strawberry above all other fruits, and has had abundant opportunity to try them in all manner of climates.

"I had occasion to travel through a town in Mexico, whose inhabitants boast that they supply strawberries to the passengers of the Mexican Central Railway every day in the year, which they do; and in the month of December, to ordinary mortals, they certainly are very satisfying, but Irapuato strawberries, to use the common vernacular, are 'not in it' with Vancouver Island strawberries.

"To the uninitiated the vital question is, what money is there in this strawberry culture? Does it pay? When at school we learned this important lesson, namely, 'what one man has done, another may do.'

"Herewith are submitted a few figures taken at Victoria:

"Grower A delivered from 1 1/2 acres

The heavy arrivals of strawberries on the local market has had the expected effect, prices working to a still lower level during last week, the prevailing figure being 10 cents per box with an apparently liberal supply at that price. The quality of the arrivals has been excellent, in fact, better than usual. While dealers state that for the table varieties the price is not likely to go any lower, the preserving variety will sell still lower than at present, as there will be a considerable supply of berries of good quality still to come in. The arrivals so far this year have been remarkably fine, both as to flavor and size, and indicate that early predictions regarding this year's crop were quite correct.

One of the most successful strawberry growers in Victoria district, is Mr. W. C. Grant, of Gordon Head, who, some little time ago, in response to a query from the provincial Government, submitted the following report: "After ten years' experimental work with strawberries and covering some 250 varieties,

per cent. for selling, or at the rate of over \$600 per acre.

"Now these were average crops—not grown by specialists but by intelligent, everyday industrious farmers who have no expert knowledge. If we average the production we find that \$700 per acre is the ordinary production. So that if we allow an extravagant amount, say \$200 per acre, for cost of cultivation, etc., we still have as a most conservative estimate the sum of \$500 as the net returns of one acre; in other words, a return of \$5,000 on ten acres."

Since these figures were compiled, the acreage under cultivation has been largely increased, and market prices fluctuated.

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destroy weeds and retain moisture. Yes, I certainly recommend mulching during the fruiting season; any kind of straw will do, but I prefer clean oat straw. We always put it on from three to ten days before the first berries are ripe. With an average crop the local market is entirely overdone. It would not be wise to encourage planting anything but shipping varieties.

Andrew Strachan, Victoria: As to my opinion of the best varieties of strawberries and methods of culture for this locality, I may say that, after experimenting with many varieties, the most suitable for this locality are: (a) For home use, the Improved Sharpless; (b) for local market, Improved Sharpless. It gives a large crop of berries of fine quality and carries its size well through the season. (c) Shipping; so far the Magoon has proved the most productive of the varieties tested and also given the best satisfaction in distant markets. (d) The Paxton has also been shipped this year with fairly satisfactory results, but, in my opinion, it is more suited for the local market. I have had the best results from planting in the spring, as early as the ground is in suitable condition, in rows 3 feet apart and plants 18 inches apart in the row. Give clean cultivation and frequent, with a view to conservation of moisture, especially after rain, to prevent the surface getting caked. I have not experimented with mulching further than straw between rows before picking commences, to keep the berries clean; this I put on about two weeks before picking commences, and carefully place under fruit and between rows.

A wholesale dealer in Victoria gives the following as his experience: "The Magoon is far and away the best all-round strawberry. Clark's Seedling is equally good, better in some respects, but it is a poor cropper. It is the berry grown at Hood River, Oregon. Sharpless is a fine large berry, but does not hold up at all."

B

N the month of July, arrived at the passage of the man cited by the German

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