

**SWAT THE SMALL APPLE AND INCREASE PROFITS**

Some Timely and Interesting Information on the Thinning of Your Apple Crop

By C. I. Lewis in American Fruit Grower  
You would hunt for years for an investment that would pay you 500%, yet right in your own orchard, by the practice of good thinning, you have this very return easily within your reach.

If you were to visit a large train shed or wholesale warehouse filled with boxes or barrels of small apples, the appropriate sign to hang thereon would be "Not Wanted". The American people have been pretty well sold to the idea of the big, red apple. The west has made a feature of producing big red apples and packing them in boxes, but this year a large percentage of the crop ran to five tier fruit—that is, 175 or more specimens of fruit to a box. Some shipping points run as high as 75%, while others run as low as 20%, but a good average would probably be 40% of the entire crop.

There is a wide difference in price paid for large apples as compared with that paid for small apples. Let us take the price paid on the auction market this past year in New York City. We checked on ten cars and found that the average price paid for 3 1/2 tier containing from 64 to 88 apples to the box, was \$2.64. For a 4 tier containing from 96 to 125 apples per box, \$2.27. For 4 1/2 tier containing 138 to 163 apples to the box, \$2.27. For 5 tier, containing 175 to 225 apples to the box, \$1.90. Then, there was a differential of 37c between 3 1/2 and 4 tier—an additional 25c between the 4 1/2 tier and the 5 tier. This made a grand total of 76c in favor of the large size apples.

**Size of Crop and Apples**  
The crop in the Pacific Northwest amounted to 44,000 cars, or approximately (based on a standard car of 76 boxes) a total of better than 33,000,000 boxes. According to our figures, about 14,000,000 boxes were 5 tier apples.

If we were conservative and allow only 25c difference between the big apples and the small ones we would find that \$5,000,000.00 was lost this year in the Pacific Northwest in growing these apples. Ordinarily, a buyer will take about 10% of a car in 5 tier apples but he objects to any more than that. The five million dollars would have bought 10,000 small spray rigs, 5,000 large sprayers; 5,000 medium-priced automobiles; 1,000 fine packing and storage houses; 500 good community packing plants and 100 large storage plants. This money would also have built more storage facilities than can be found in any one valley in the Pacific Northwest.

We must not think, however, that the west is the principal section of the country where small apples are grown, because, everything being equal, the east seems to grow even a larger percentage, if one can judge in visiting the markets. With the large crop in sight this year, it would look as if it were an ideal time for us to take into account what conditions produce small apples. There are many factors such as the weather through the previous season—the amount of soil moisture, especially in the late summer and fall—the length of the growing season—the soil fertility—insufficient pruning—and last of all, not doing enough thinning. The cost is not a sufficient excuse for neglecting the thinning. An Oregon orchard of twenty acre; of twelve-year-old trees, producing this year 6,864 packed boxes of apples, had a thinning cost of \$374.37, or an average of 5 2-3c a packed box. The thinning in the Wenatchee Valley will range from 2c to 8c per box, depending on conditions—probably 5c would be a fair average, and this is probably a very fair average for the entire Pacific Northwest. When one thinks of the tremendous gain in value, it is easily seen to be a paying investment.

Thinning can be done in two ways—

by pruning off some of the wood and by hand thinning.

Thinning will increase the size of the fruit and reduce the percentage of culls which means an increasing percentage of the money-making grades. It will conserve the vigor of the tree and tend to make it an annual bearer. It will also help to control pests and diseases and reduce the windfalls—and there seems to be no loss in the ultimate quantity of fruit through thinning. The number of boxes or barrels produced would be about the same, and the difference would be in the size of the specimens. Thinning should be done as soon as the June drop is over. The sooner the fruit can be removed after that date, the more you will conserve the energies of the tree.

The small sized apples like the Jonathan, Winesap and Grimes, need very heavy thinning. They say eight inches is the proper distance between specimens but in some seasons with very heavy crops on the trees of questionable vigor, this would be leaving the fruit too close together. As the Winesap and Jonathan get older, they tend to produce smaller and smaller fruit and it is absolutely essential to give vigorous thinning if size is to be maintained. The Rome is demanded in large size. It is a nice baking apple and hotels and restaurants demand them large—so generous thinning must be given this variety. Some of the orchardists in Idaho are finding that where good thinning is given the Rome apple, it tends to become an annual bearer.

The King is a variety that must not be given heavy thinning as it tends to produce overgrown specimens and has an inclination to water core. Excessive thinning aggravates this condition.

The Baldwin and Spitz tend to bear every other year and during the heavy years can be given very generous thinning or the fruit will be small. The Spitz is a much lighter bearer than the Baldwin and consequently is not given as heavy thinning.

The Ben Davis and the Black Ben need to have plenty of color to sell well and they have a habit of bearing their fruit in clusters—quite often shaded by the leaves. They should be thinned down with a light crop—two to a cluster—and where the crop is heavy, should be thinned out to about seven inches apart.

**Thinning Must Be Generous**  
The Yellow Newton will often set five specimens of fruit to a cluster. They must have very generous thinning. If unthinned, the fruit becomes very small, wormy and much of the fruit will be forced off because of the short stems. On light crops, two specimens may be left to clusters but ordinarily, we thin this variety down to about one specimen to a spur.

The big money in Delicious is on the 3 1/2 tier fruit. The price falls away very rapidly on the small sizes. To get such fruit, one must thin generously. The demand also is for high color on this variety—another need for careful thinning. The bearing habit of the Delicious is to produce on short spurs with from one to three apples in a place. This variety should be thinned down so that

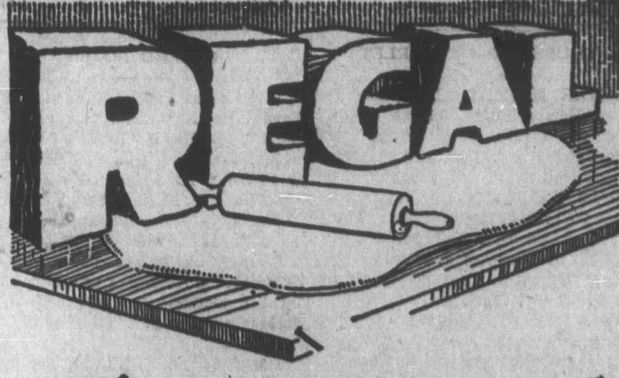
with a heavy load, only one apple is left to a spur.

In thinning apples, remember that the small apple, the malformed apple, the runt apple that you find in June will occupy the same relative position to the rest of the fruit in the fall, so it goes without saying that you should leave the finest specimens.

Space does not allow us to go into the question of thinning peaches and pears thoroughly, but these fruits need just as generous thinning as the apple. This is especially true of the peach. Without heavy thinning, large fruits cannot be produced. Where cherry trees tend to produce fruit which is too small, the best remedy seems to be to give a little more pruning to reduce the amount of bearing.

Man is a queer proposition remarks the Hanover Post. He will go clean through the roof if the central girl does not give him his number in half a second, and yet he will sit hour after hour in the boiling sun, with the mosquitoes eating him up, vainly hoping some nice little fish will come along and take a chance at his hook.

Self-control is a simple matter of looking the early strawberries over and then ordering a pound of prunes.



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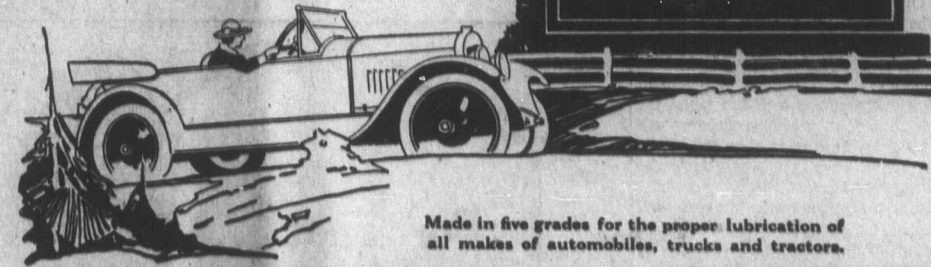
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No. 96 From Halifax, arrives 10.05 a.m.  
No. 98 From Yarmouth, arrives 3.20 p.m.  
No. 97 From Halifax, arrives 6.17 p.m.  
No. 99 From Halifax (Tues. Fri., Sun.) arrives 12.18 a. m.  
No. 100 From Yarmouth (Mon. Wed., Sat.), arrives 4.28 a. m.

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