

branches. Often the whole ground is taken up by trees with long, bare limbs having fruit buds only at the extremities of the branches. This condition can be avoided to a large extent by judicious pruning. Pruning is usually done during the latter part of March and April. Wounds often heal quicker when the pruning is done a little later on after growth has commenced, but it is not often practicable to prune at that time. Further information regarding pruning may be found in the Bulletin on Apple Culture by the writer, W. T. Macoun, Horticulturist, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa.

#### Forestry Plantation

Some 30,000 seedlings will be planted at the Ontario Agricultural College, this spring, principally Norway spruce, white pine, white ash, basswood, and sugar maple. These young trees are intended to be ready for distribution among the farmers of Ontario in the spring of 1905 and 1906. Mr. C. A. Zavitz will have charge of this work.

#### British Columbia Fruit

The growing commercial importance of the fruit industry of British Columbia is evidenced by the increased shipments by freight and express, as the following figures show. There were carried by the C.P.R. during 1902, 1,459 tons of fruit, while in 1903, 1,987½ tons were carried; an increase of 35 per cent. The Dominion Express Co. carried in 1897, 70 tons of fruit; in 1901, 378 tons; in 1902, 483 tons; in 1903, over 676 tons. The establishment of a fruit cannery in New Westminster is assured, which will employ forty to fifty hands during the season. This will give growers a market for their surplus fruit.

At the present time British Columbia fruit practically rules the markets as far east as California. The markets of the Northwest, though vast and valuable, are very scattered; Winnipeg is the great wholesale centre, and is of such importance that it enters into the calculations of fruit growers all over the continent, consequently the competition there is keen. Orders are being received from Australia, Hawaii, China, and Japan, and efforts were made last fall to get a foothold in Britain. On Oct. 16th last, Messrs. Stirling and Pitcairn, of Kelowna, shipped the first carload of British Columbia apples, consisting of Spies, Baldwins, Ontarios and Canada Reds, to the British market. They arrived in Glasgow on November 9th, in first-class condition and were sold at an average price of about 6s. per box, while Eastern Canada apples were selling in the same place at about one dollar per barrel less, figuring three and one-half boxes to the barrel. However, when the extra freight charges to Montreal were deducted, the net returns were hardly satisfactory. Enquiries are now being received from other firms who saw the British Columbia fruit and learned that it gave first-class satisfaction, so that it is thought that if more and larger shipments were sent forward, better prices would be realized.

#### Red Polled Cattle

Do you know of any person in Canada who keeps Red Polled cattle? I would like to hear from them if there are any.—JOHN STEPHENSON, Lambton Co., Ont.

We do not know of any breeders of pure-bred Red Polled cattle in Canada. If any of our readers know of such and will forward their addresses, we shall be pleased to send them on to Mr. Stephenson.

## Nature about the Farm

EDITED BY C. W. NASH

#### FIELD MICE—CROWS—GROUNDHOGS

Since writing my last article I have received reports from almost all parts of the province as to the damage done to fruit trees by field mice during the past winter. These reports show that the actual financial loss sustained will be very severe. We have not, however, got to the end of the trouble yet, for the mice which survived the winter, will increase enormously next summer and will probably do as much, or more, mischief to growing crops and grain in the fields, as they have done in the orchards. In the counties where red clover seed is produced there is also likely to be trouble, for these mice are the greatest enemies of the Humble bees, destroying their nests and devouring the larvae. Humble bees are essential for the fertilization of the red clover plant, but very few other insects being able to accomplish this necessary process, if, therefore, the bees are destroyed the crop of clover seed will be decidedly short. As the mice have become so abundant nature will as is usual in such cases, probably provide some means for keeping them in check through their natural enemies, the Hawks, Owls, etc. If so, we shall soon be relieved, that is, if we exercise sufficient sense to allow the birds of prey to do the work for which nature intended them. Failing this, we shall have to submit to great loss, until we can by our own ingenuity get rid of the pests.

During the summer something can be done by sending good dogs out to the fields wherever men are working. For the purpose of hunting out and killing the mice, Terriers or Spaniels are the best dogs to have; they delight in the work and will kill a great many in a day. Some Collies I have seen were fairly good, the majority, however, are not expert mouse catchers. Cats are of very little use in destroying field mice; the common mice of the house and barn they will kill and eat readily enough, but the short-tailed field mouse is not to their liking as a rule. There is a remedy, however, which is perfectly efficacious wherever it can be used. By its means orchard trees can be protected during the winter, with very little trouble and at small cost, but as it consists of poisoned grain, its use in the summer might be attended with some damage to stock. The method of preparing the poisoned grain is as follows. Boil one pint of vinegar, and while hot add to it one-half ounce of strychnine; after the strychnine has all dissolved, add three quarts of water. In this solution soak ten pounds of wheat for about eighteen hours, or until all the solution is entirely absorbed by the grain. Stir frequently while the wheat is soaking in order that the grain may be uniformly saturated with the poison. When all the solution is absorbed, spread the wheat in the sun to dry. Next dissolve three pounds of sugar in one gallon of water and boil down to half a gallon. This gives a good thick syrup; when cold, stir in one teaspoonful of oil of anise. When the poisoned wheat is dry, or nearly so, pour the syrup over it and stir thoroughly until each grain of wheat is more or less covered with a coating of syrup. Then dry thoroughly. To use this in summer, place half a teaspoonful in the runs of the mice. To protect fruit trees, a tablespoonful should be

placed at the foot of each tree on the bare earth, when the first snow falls, or just before. The mice will eat the wheat at once, and as each grain contains a fatal dose of poison, they will be destroyed before they can do any mischief.

#### CROWS

Farmer and horse and hired man, Harrow and horse and plow, Over the field in straggling line Ever on they go. And watchful on his lofty pine Sitteth the thoughtful crow.

—F.H. Sweet.

I have often wondered what the black rascals were thinking about when I have seen them sitting on the tree tops watching me as I worked in the field. No doubt, they had decided in their own minds that the work being done would presently benefit them to a satisfactory extent, as it certainly did, when corn planting was the business on hand. This spring, I am happy to say, that I believe Crows will not be as abundant as they have been for some years, the mortality among those which wintered here having been very great. When the snow went away, dozens of dead birds were to be seen lying under the pine trees in which they were in the habit of roosting, the deep snow and intense cold having proved too much for their hardy constitutions. We can very well spare those that have gone and some more, too, for they had become altogether too numerous and destructive. Not only were they a nuisance in the corn fields, but they destroyed, every season far more of our valuable small birds than we can afford to lose. It is an easy matter to get rid of the corn and incidentally get rid of a few of them, by using strychnine. Dissolve half an ounce of strychnine in hot vinegar, as already described, to that add one quart of water. In this solution soak ten pounds of corn until all the liquid is absorbed, then spread the grain to dry. When the first crows visit the cornfield, scatter the poisoned grain thinly along the rows, the birds will eat it once, but for the rest of the season they will religiously avoid that field. A few will be killed and the rest so disgusted with the proceedings that they will have no more to do with it.

A correspondent has asked me how to get rid of groundhogs. I have, during the last few years, given the remedy several times, but this is a matter of general interest, will do so again. The best method of destroying them is to get a few ounces of bi-sulphide of carbon, pour a little of this fluid on a ball of fibre or rag about as big as a russet apple, throw this ball into the burrow as far as possible, then close the entrances of the burrow with a sod. The fumes of the bi-sulphide will kill all the animals in the burrow. Be careful to keep the bi-sulphide of carbon away from fire, as it is very explosive.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS  
M. J. R., Dorchester—I see a little bird quite frequently here. It is about the size of a Chickadee; back dark slate color, this same color covers its head and about one-third of its breast, forming a sort of hood which comes around in front. The remaining part of the breast and under the tail is white; on the breast where the two colors meet is a distinct line straight across the breast. It has also two white feathers on the side of its tail, seen only when flying.