

The Farm.

Hillcrest Orchards, Kentville.

The orchards of Mr. R. S. Eaton of Kentville, N. S., are of interest to fruit growers for several reasons. (1) There is nothing finer in the whole of Canada. (2) Artificial fertilizers, chemicals, clover and tillage have been depended upon solely, no stable manure. (3) No attempt is made to crop the orchard. (4) Mr. Eaton has succeeded in making his trees pay their way at a very early age. (5) Mr. Eaton has adopted new methods of tillage. (6) An attempt has been made to arrange the orchard upon a scientific basis with a view to economy.

Mr. Eaton's plan of orchard is to plant standard apple trees 3 1/2 ft. or two rods apart in rows 33 ft. apart. In the centre of each square so formed another permanent or standard apple tree is placed. This brings the rows 16 1/2 ft apart and the trees 23 1/2 feet apart diagonally. Next a temporary apple tree of a young bearing variety is planted between each of the trees in every row. This brings the trees all 16 1/2 feet apart. Again a plum, dwarf pear, quince or other small growing tree is planted in every space bringing the trees 8 1/4 ft apart in the rows, the rows remaining a rod apart.

S p t p s p t p s p t p s
 t p s p t p s p t p s p t
 s p t p s p t p s p t p s
 t p s p t p s p t p s p t
 s p t p s p t p s p t p s

In the above diagram of orchard "S" stands for standard apples as Gravenstein, Ribston, Kings or Baldwin. "t" stands for temporary apples of young fruiting varieties as Wealthy, Wagener or Ben Davis; free growing cherries as Governor Wood, Windsor, etc., or free growing varieties of peaches. In the spaces marked "p" are plums, dwarf pears, quinces, apricots or small growing and non-rotting cherries as Early Richmond, English Morello, etc. This system gives 322 trees to the acre.

Every 20 rods both east and west and north and south an open space is left for a roadway, dividing the orchard into blocks of 2 1/2 acres each. Instead of planting a standard in every square as mentioned in the first of this description, a plum or peach may be placed in every third square and the row thus formed be filled in with plums, peaches or other short lived trees. Every sixth row on this plan is composed wholly of temporary trees, which can be cut down in 15 years leaving a roadway for teaming and spraying. As the trees grow and begin to crowd each other they are to be cut out in the reverse order of their planting, till when the orchard is fully grown only "S" will be left.

Two thousand of Mr. Eaton's cherries were dug up from the woods and later grafted with improved kinds.

Mammoth clover is sown about the middle of July and there is no tillage until about the middle of next May, when the clover is ploughed under. In plowing by the trees a long chain is used with adjusted coupling and the soil is always thrown toward the trees. From the middle of May till the middle of July the harrow is used once a week, which with the one plowing is all the cultivation the orchard gets.

In a 60 acre orchard it is necessary to economise time. With this in view Mr. Eaton has widened an ordinary six foot disk harrow to eight ft by adding four disks. The rows being 16 1/2 ft apart this harrow only goes one turn for each row of trees, and one team among these rows one quarter of a mile long will do 20 acres in 10 hours. Each half of the disk harrow is at angle so it draws the earth from the trees at one end and from a line midway between the rows at the other thus forming a dead hollow. To obviate this the harrow is widened out to 12 ft. end a blank of four feet left in the centre. This secures a level surface and enables the horses to keep entirely clear of the trees. For pulverizing the soil a spring tooth harrow has been widened to eight feet in the same way as the disk harrow. This plan appears to work admirably for there is scarcely a weed to be seen in the orchard, and the ground is mellow as an ash heap.

Pruning is done in June and July in order to induce fruit bud formation and to avoid the waste of wood growth which belongs to winter pruning. The stems of permanent apple trees are trimmed five and a half to six feet high, but the temporary tree of all species are trained low and headed in, thus gaining in four years as much fruiting top as is ordinarily obtained in double that time. Young Burbank plums and Ben Davis apple trees not above seven feet high in this orchard are bearing two bushels of fruit each. The temporary trees are never allowed to interfere with the growth of the permanent ones, but after they are large enough to bear a barrel each they are kept headed in.

In spraying as in cultivation it is necessary to operate on a large scale, and Mr. Eaton has invented apparatus suited to his circumstances. One pump is made to operate two sets of hose each with double nozzle thus throwing four streams at once. Extension pieces of 3-4 iron pipe are used and a small saucer shaped piece of galvanized iron soldered around them a few inches below the nozzles prevent any drip. Mr. Eaton this year left one row throughout his orchard unsprayed as an experiment and is more than ever convinced of the value of spraying. He usually applies the Bordeaux mixture four times a year and believes it of value as a fungicide and also a protection against black knot in plum trees. It might be noted that the orchard is free from black knot.

As to varieties Hillcrest orchards have in apples:—The Gravenstein, Ribston, Blenheim, Wealthy, Baldwin, Wagner, Ben Davis, Golden Russet, Fallawater and Nonpariel. In plums a speciality is made of the Japanese varieties of which there are 1100 Burbanks, 400 Abundance, 300 Red Junes and 200 Wickson giving a succession of fruit from August till well into October. One thousand other plums are divided among the Lombard, German, Prune, Rene Claude, Quackenboss, Niagara, Bradshaw, Monarch, Black Diamond and Grand Duke. Plums have been shipped to London with results that justify the expectation of finding a market for surplus production. Ten varieties of peaches have been planted seven of which the Alexander, Hyrus Surprise, Elberta, Crosby, Hills Chill, Mountain Rose and Early Rivers ripening in seven successive weeks have proved sufficiently hardy. This year Mr. Eaton had 40 boxes of Governor Wood and Early Richmond cherries and expects to have 1000 of the English Morello. The various kinds of cherries ripen from July to September. In pears there are the Bartlets, Clapps Favorite, Duchess, Louise Bon, Flemish Beauty, Anjou and others. Three kinds of apricots are grown and also saw several hundred quince trees.

How rapidly the value of the land multiplies is seen from the fact that 15 years ago the oldest part of this orchard was in forest and six years ago much of it was in stump and worth about \$10 per acre. Today it could not be bought for less than \$500 per acre.—The Outlook.

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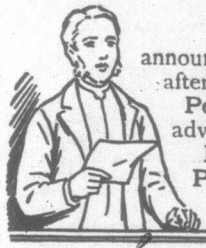
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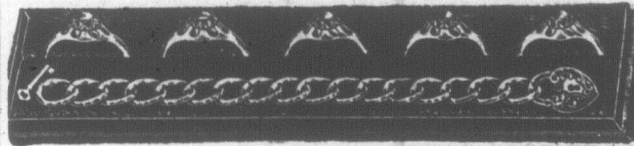


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