

Culture of Window Plants.

There is nothing one particle as effective in lending cheerfulness to the home and giving it an air of culture as a wisely selected collection of common foliage and flowering house plants tastefully arrayed in the streaming sunlight of a big bay window. To be thrifty and appear at their best, most varieties of house plants require abundance of sunlight. In regard to the direction of the exposure, Vick is of the opinion the best is a southern one, and second only to it is an eastern; and in the first has found that such plants as geraniums, lantanas, heliotropes, and other varieties are fond of sunshine; while begonias, fuchsias, and plants of this character, which like the morning sun better than the more intense afternoon rays, make better progress in an eastern exposure. It is advised that if a west window must be used, that the intense heat should be weakened by a curtain of thin muslin which will permit vines being trained over the glass so as to temper the sun's heat. In a north window, it is stated that foliage plants may be successfully grown, such as ferns, palms, and others. English ivy will thrive there, as will also the hardy and rapid-growing tradescantia.

The Culture of Nuts.

The Washington Department of Agriculture has drawn attention to the possibility of much more being done in the direction of profitable nut culture. They state that by selection and culture, nuts are found to improve almost as readily as fruits. Thin shells and increased size are the most common results of improvement. It is a strange, unaccountable fact that such nut-bearing trees as the black-walnut, butternut, hickory, and chestnut, are not so popular as they should be, or so plentifully grown in plantations as they might be. Considering the high value of black-walnut, and even butternut, it is surprising that these trees have not been more extensively grown, even for their timber, not to say anything of the possible profit from the nuts. The Pomologist of the Department of Agriculture gives some advice on the planting of nuts which is timely, and also appropriate to add to our observations. Nuts for planting, that authority asserts, should invariably be selected for superiority of size, flavor, or thinness of shell. As early as possible after their maturity they should be placed in boxes of soil, the conditions of moisture and depth which are provided being closely patterned after those furnished by nature in the forests. The chief object of the box is to prevent mice and moles from disturbing the nuts before the tap-root has begun its growth. The boxes of imbedded nuts should be sunk to the level of the surface in some place protected from pigs, squirrels, and chickens. In the spring, when bursting open with the growing germ, the nuts may be transplanted to the nursery row or to the spot in which the trees are desired to stand.

Essentials of a Good Variety of Strawberry.

So numerous are the varieties of strawberries, and so great is the interest taken in the production of new varieties, that it is important to give some consideration to the qualities that it would be desirable to secure. It is evident that it is hopeless to endeavour to attach to one variety all the attributes desirable in a strawberry, yet a definite standard of major qualities may be attained through continued straining after an ideal. Mr. E. C. Green, of the Ohio Experimental Station, who has issued a comprehensive bulletin on strawberries, asserts that strawberry growers desire that a variety should be possessed of, first of all, vigor, health, hardiness, and productiveness. None of these attributes, in his opinion, can be sacrificed

except in a limited degree. Besides these qualities, others are required, but in a limited degree. He further states that one grower places productiveness first, another firmness, another size and beauty, while in certain cases quality is ranked first. As he says, given a healthy, vigorous plant, then whatever other qualities a variety possesses must be very marked so as to fit it to meet certain requirements as well or better than any other variety. He concludes his references on this topic by saying that if originators and growers will cease trying to find varieties that are suited to particular soils, and send out those only that succeed over wide areas, and the wider the better, and that have one or more marked characteristics, much annoyance and useless labor will be saved.

Strawberries for Market.

FIRST PAPER.

This delicious fruit will always be a favorite in this country as it is the first of our native fruits to ripen. It will always, therefore, be in demand. Indeed, the demand for this, as for all kinds of fruits, may be expected to increase with the increase of our population. The best method of cultivating will on that account be always a matter of much importance.

The best soil for growing strawberries is what may be termed a sandy loam. This should not be too light or the later berries will not ripen, and hence the crop will be small. A black loam is not so good, as it is liable to heave in winter, and a clay soil is quite unsuitable. Clay loams produce heavy crops, but much more care must be exercised in working them to obtain the best results.

The aspect of the plot has much to do with its suitability. If the situation is quite low it is much liable to suffer from frosts in time of blossoming. If it is quite high the winds are apt to blow away the pollen and thus the fertilization is imperfect, and in winter the bleak winds are prone to freeze the plants even when protected. A medium elevation is therefore best, and if somewhat protected by a belt of trees on the windward side, the situation is somewhat improved. If the inclination is toward the south the ripening process is hastened, but if toward the north it is retarded. It is therefore better to plant early varieties on a southerly slope, and the later ones on a northerly incline. If planted on a hillside with a steep inclination, the soil is much apt to wash away, which increases the difficulty of cultivation.

The soil should be thoroughly underdrained where the subsoil is not sufficiently porous to drain itself. When the drainage is perfect and the subsoil is suitable, the rootlets go down deeply, and the vigor of growth is thereby much enhanced.

As strawberries are a crop that require much attention, the preparation of the soil is all-important. It would be folly to plant them either in a poor soil or in one that is full of weeds or weed seeds.

In order to clean the soil and to manure it properly the following plan may be adopted: Manure the land heavily with farm-yard manure. As much as twenty to thirty loads may be applied to the acre. It may be put on sod, and it is then deeply ploughed in. A crop of corn is grown upon it and this is followed by a crop of potatoes. If the cultivation of both crops is thorough, the land will be clean. The strawberries come next. If the soil is not very foul with weeds, and if the weed seeds are not numerous in the manure, the only crop preceding the strawberries may be potatoes. Coming after a corn crop the roots of the corn stalks would be in the way. When the strawberries come after potatoes, following sod, there will

be more humus in the soil, which improves its mechanical texture and also furnishes food for the plants.

If two hoed crops are grown in succession after the manuring, there must then be added to the soil before planting the strawberries a heavy coating of wood ashes or a liberal supply of superphosphate. These may be applied after the ground is ploughed in the spring, previous to planting the strawberries, and incorporated in the surface soil by the use of the harrow. The effect of wood ashes is to induce a greater growth of fruit, and to render it firmer and of good color.

Phosphates and some kinds of superphosphates may be applied to the plants at various stages of growth prior to the period of blossoming. These should be sprinkled along the rows when the plants are dry, and if any considerable quantity is applied it may be necessary to brush over the plants with a broom lest it burn the leaves. It is usually considered better to apply these manures oftener and in less quantity at a time, than to put on a considerable amount at one time with long intervals between the applications.

(To be continued.)

The Export of Winter Apples.

Read by J. T. McBRIDE, Montreal, before the Dominion Convention of Fruit Growers.

Regarding the profits and drawbacks in connection with the export of winter apples, allow me, as briefly as possible, to give you a few facts gained by fifteen years' practical experience in British and foreign markets. The most profitable apples for export are: King's, Cranberry Pippins, Baldwin's, Gravensteins, Bishop's Pippins, Ribston Pippins, and Golden Russets. Occasionally Spies and Greenings make money abroad, but, as a rule, they sell for more money in Canada.

All apples should be picked and culled with the greatest care. We are advancing in this department yearly, but still there is room for improvement. The more care in this respect the better name will our fine Canadian apples gain, and they are second to none, and the more profit will be obtainable for either local or foreign buyers. Cease to purchase fruit that has been carelessly culled before being packed. Many a buyer has ordered his men away from an orchard where the grower has carelessly picked his apples, and wisely so, for no packer can make first-class shipping stock with such fruit. Only No. 1 standard sized barrels should ever be used. They ought to be kept perfectly clean, and when packed should be headed and distinctly branded. A fancy package will command more money than one with which less care has been taken. It is better to mark our apples No. 1 and No. 2; I mean, use a different stencil. No. 1 should be strictly choice apples; No. 2 ought to be good, clean, sound, selected apples; the balance should be dried, evaporated or made into cider, for all of which a market can be found.

All shipping apples must be carefully faced, well shaken and lightly packed. A barrel that shows the least slackness on this side the Atlantic will make no money for the shipper on the other side, where they often make and sell at slack, what here would be considered tight and in firm order. Now, we have our fruit properly gathered and packed, the question is, where had we better sell? Our advice would be to sell to some one on this side of the water. When we require foreign fruit we are compelled to buy. So, if Europe wants our grains and fruit we would say, Come across, examine, buy, and we will ship and draw for amount, allowing no claims whatever. Take your risks, as we are compelled to do when we purchase oranges, lemons, grapes, etc.

When consigning, our apples as a rule are shipped to Liverpool, London, Glasgow, and Bristol. They generally go into a dealer's hands, who hands the bill of lading to an auctioneer, by whom they are offered at first sale after being landed. The auction system is all right in itself, but the charges are far too high.