

# THE CANADIAN FARMER.

## Horticulture

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### Seasonable Hints for Fruit Growers.

"The day is cold and dark and dreary;  
It rains, and the wind is never weary;  
The vine still lings to the mouldering wall,  
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,  
And the day is dark and dreary."

And so the dark days and chilly winds of November have encouraged a state of mental depression, as one meditates mournfully upon the failures of another unsuccessful fruit season: during which peaches and cherries have totally failed in most sections, apples have scarcely paid for handling, and even grain crops, though abundant, have sold for unprecedentedly low prices.

But in anticipation of better days sure to come, we will adopt the sentiment of the last stanza of Longfellow's "Rainy Day,"

"Be still sad heart! and cease repining;  
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;  
Thy fate is the common fate of all,  
Into each life some rain must fall,  
Some days must be dark and dreary."

#### THE SPOT ON THE APPLE.

Of late years probably nothing has so discouraged apple growers as the cracks, scabs and fungus spots which have become so common upon this staple fruit. Some years ago the Newtown Pippin, probably the best apple in the world for quality, was discarded in many parts of Canada by growers because of spots. The Famense or snow apple followed suit, and has become utterly worthless in western Ontario for the same reason. In the Niagara District we have not had a Famense fit for shipping for at least ten years, but fortunately in the vicinity of Montreal this best of table apples succeeds admirably, and has been shipped south in large quantities at high prices. Next the Fall Pippin, one of the very best fall cooking apples, succumbed to the black spot, and became also unprofitable for market. This season there was a slight improvement so that perhaps one barrel in three was first-class, but even such results are most unsatisfactory. Then the Early Harvest became also affected. It is the choicest apple of its season for either dessert or cooking, ripening nearly two weeks before the Red Astracan, and it is very profitable if clean, often bringing as high as \$4.00 per bbl. when shipped early. But this apple, as grown in the Niagara District, has become unfit for shipping except in rare instances. The Vandueve and Rambo are also utterly worthless for the same reason. And now the dread disease is attacking, in some instances, the Greening and the Northern Spy; apples which we had supposed quite unsusceptible to its ravages.

Small and harmless as this spot appears at the line of gathering, it

develops most rapidly when the apples are stored in heaps or in barrels, into a most ugly disfigurement, soon rotting its way into the heart of apple.

A writer in the *Horticulturist* for September complains that in his orchard of some fifteen acres he has no variety entirely free from spots and blemishes except perhaps the Duchess of Ogdenburgh; and he asks if there is a remedy. The editor refers him to the report of the committee on the apple spot, which he adds is anxiously expected. We fear our friends will look to the report in vain for a remedy.

Mr. John Croil, one of that committee, writes that he has been unsuccessful in every appliance. He had tried unleached ashes thrown over the trees when wet with dew, unslacked lime in the same way, sulphur dissolved in water and syringed, and sulphate of soda in the same way, and all with no benefit.

The writer is also a member of that committee, and has tried faithfully the effect of syringing with water saturated with flour of sulphur. The sulphur thus deposited on the fruit would by the action of the sun and air be converted into sulphurous acid gas which is very destructive of fungi. But it utterly failed to destroy the black spot, and our Early Harvest and Famense were as worthless as ever.

Like the plum knot no doubt the black spot spreads from tree to tree by minute spores; and if so, the sooner those old Famense and Fall Pippin which have been breeding and spreading disease, are cut down, or top-grafted, the better for one's own orchard as well as for that of his neighbors. Also farmers planting young orchards will do well to avoid these kinds above mentioned, as subject to spotting.

#### THE STORING OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

In the house cellar, a common practise at most country homes, is condemned by good authority; as prejudicial to health. The following explanation will show the ground upon which this judgment is based:

A fifth part of the air we breathe is made up of oxygen gas, and the remaining four parts of nitrogen gas. The former is that which purifies the blood and sustains animal life. The air may be rendered impure in various ways, as for instance by a burning lamp. The blaze is the result of the chemical union of the oxygen of the air with the combustible substances in the oil and wick; and the product is given off in the shape of carbonic acid gas, which is a poisonous element.

A similar chemical action takes place in breathing. The oxygen of the air is absorbed into the blood through the lungs; its chemical union with the

combustible substance in the blood such as carbon and hydrogen, produces the heat of the body; and the product is given off into the air through the lungs in the shape of moisture and carbonic acid gas. Thus, air once breathed is so vitiated, that if kept by itself, it would be incapable of sustaining the blaze of a lamp.

Decaying vegetables have the same effect upon the air, and more or less according to the stage of decay. Apples, potatoes, &c., even in the process of ripening, are continually absorbing oxygen from the air, and giving off carbonic acid gas and moisture. It is quite evident, therefore, that the air of a cellar so used as a storeroom would be impure, and if ill ventilated and kept long closely shut up might even be dangerous to human life.

The barn cellar therefore, and not the house cellar is the proper place for storing fruits and vegetables; or if there is no place but under the dwelling where they may be stored, they should be packed in close barrels, and headed up until required for use, and the cellar kept well ventilated.

In the *American Agriculturist* for November it is stated that the presence of

#### PLANTS IN THE SLEEPING ROOM.

Is not injurious to health as is usually supposed. The amount of carbonic acid gas given off in a night by an ordinary window garden, would not equal that exhaled by a single person; while on the other hand the plant continually giving off oxygen, and, when in flower, ozone, a most invigorating form of oxygen gas. People who have spent much of their lives among flowers have found themselves much improved in health thereby, and even persons of consumptive tendency have been restored to health by living among plants.

How many of our evils are imaginary? Surely many a patient in a sick room will rejoice to hear that the geranium and the fuchsia, the begonia and the monthly rose, need not be banished, but that these and others may be supplied in abundance as friendly visitors, which will help to purify the atmosphere of the bed room, and which at the same time will relieve the monotony of dreary days for a patient shut in from nature's charms, and longing for a sight of green leaves.

It is now high time for the farmer to guard well against

#### MICE IN THE ORCHARD.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and perhaps many pounds in this instance. What is more annoying upon the disappearance of snow in spring time than to find one's choicest trees girdled by the mice? There is an orchard of say 300 thrifty apple trees ten years planted. Each

tree is worth at least \$20.00. Spring comes, and the deep snow disappears revealing a sad sight; one hundred of these beautiful trees, the pride of the farmer, destroyed. The dainty repast of an apparently insignificant enemy has cost about \$200. "Surely you value the trees at too high a figure," says one; "I would be satisfied with \$1.00 per tree for each year's cultivation, or \$40 per acre annually for the care of a young orchard."

Well, the writer begs to differ. Suppose you had to wait ten or fifteen years for your pay, would you not want compound interest? And so we think that as a matter of simple investment aside from prospective income, an apple tree ten years planted stands the farmer at the lowest count the sum of \$20.

"But," says some wise-acre, "you need not lose those trees. Graft in scions to bridge over the wound, and so save them." The experiment is tried faithfully according to the instructions going the rounds of all our horticultural papers. Vain attempt! Not one in three grows, and those which do are but poor stunted excuses for trees, and so another year is lost before the rooting out and ripening takes place.

So taking him all in all the mouse is a dangerous enemy of the farmer and orchardist, and we hope our friends being thus "forewarned" will also be "forearmed."

Many people suppose that the mice which nibble the cheese in the pantry, and those which gnaw the trees in the orchard are identical in kind. One man was trying to shut up all the mice he could in his cellar, for fear they would get out among his fruit trees. This is quite a mistake. The family *Muridae* to which the house mouse (*mus musculus*) belongs, is totally distinct from the *Arvicolae*, or field mouse family, of which there are many species. Therefore, in trapping the house mouse the farmer in no degree lessening the number of the enemy of his apple trees.

There are many means recommended for guarding against the mouse, as painting the trees with substances distasteful to him, placing stovepipes about the trees, or tarred felt papers; but probably nothing is simpler and more effective than a mound of fresh earth thrown up about each tree in the month of November or December of each year. Mice running along the surface of the ground beneath the snow will be turned aside by the mound of earth, and the tree will be safe. Care must always be taken to first clear away all rubbish from the trees, as brush or long grass, and in heaping to avoid sods, as all these only encourage the presence of the enemy.

Cats should be encouraged, for they are the fruit growers' friends; not fat lazy things, well fed on meat, and which lie about on soft cushions; but cats scantily fed upon a milk diet, and sent out doors to hunt fresh meat for themselves, in the way of fat sleek mice.