

NITRATE OF SODA FOR SMALL FRUITS.



HERE is no question at all as to the great advantages to the fruit grower of having commercial fertilizers placed within his reach. Formerly, his plantations were limited by the supply of manure, and his only hope of enlargement was by increasing the number of his stock, thus compelling him to unite his two lines of industry. But now that the elements contained in barnyard manure can be obtained at a low price in the shape of commercial fertilizers, the fruit grower is only limited by the amount of his land and by his capital, for he can easily procure every needed element of fertility.

The three principle elements in barnyard manure are phosphoric acid, potash and nitrogen. These can be separately purchased, the first in the superphosphate or ground apatite rock, which is being quarried so extensively in the county of Renfrew, and sold at about \$18 per ton; the second in muriate of potash, or in wood ashes; and the third in sulphate of ammonia, or in nitrate of soda, the latter of which is now to be had at about \$60 per ton.

Having some inquiries respecting the use of nitrate of soda, we will at present only speak of this substance. It is sometimes called Chili saltpetre, because it is imported in large quantities from Peru, in which country it is found in a crude state incrusting the soil of a desert. Its value in the garden, like that of other compounds of nitrogen, consists in its power to promote leaf growth, and consequently the general health and vigor of plants. Sulphate of ammonia has been largely used to furnish nitrogen, but of late nitrate of soda has been offered at such reasonable prices that it has displaced the former to a large extent. The application of from one to two hundred pounds per acre will give marked results and well repay the outlay.

One caution needs to be observed, and that is to apply nitrate of soda in the early part of the growing season, just when the plant most needs the stimulus, and when it will not be likely to be leached away before being taken up. Its value to the gardener has been so thoroughly proved by Mr. Joseph Harris, author of "Walks and Talks," that we quote the following from his writings:

"The effect of nitrate of soda on strawberries in the dry climate of the United States is very beneficial. It not only doubles or trebles the yield, but the strawberries are larger and handsomer, and consequently command a much higher price in market.

"No ordinary amount of manure will produce so great an effect, for the reason that the plants grow and form their fruit early in the season. The nitrate of soda furnishes the plants with nitric acid before the nitrogen of the manure can be converted into this essential ingredient of plant food.

"A few years ago, we published a statement in regard to the astonishing effect of a large dressing of nitrate of soda on an old strawberry bed. The bed