



Packing Peaches on the Farm of J. W. Smith & Sons, Winona, Ont.

After the covers are nailed on, always pile the boxes of apples on the sides, and load into wagons on the sides. Do not pile boxes of apples into wagons by standing them on the ends. This doubles the risk of bruising when hauling by increasing the weight on the apples in the under end, and settles the apples in the

box, making an empty space in the top end, and the pack may be rejected for loose pack. Packers will not be held responsible for loose pack when the apples come to the warehouse loaded in this way. Always pile boxes of packed apples on the sides and load them into your wagons the same way.

Picking and Packing Peaches

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WITHIN a few weeks fruit growers will be busy with the peach crop. It might be well, therefore, to briefly summarize a few of the factors that go to make success in picking and packing this fruit.

The longer a peach is allowed to remain on the tree till fully ripe, the better will it be in quality, but it must be picked sufficiently firm to allow it to carry without injury to such distant markets as eastern Ontario and the middle western provinces.

In picking peaches it should not be necessary to press the fruit to determine whether it is sufficiently ripe to pick. The appearance of the different varieties varies considerably, and only experience can teach one to quickly determine with the eye the fruit that is ready to pick from that which is nearly but not quite fit. A large proportion of the help available in the fruit growing districts is inexperienced and necessarily slow, but it will pay any grower to carefully teach the pickers how to pick, and save himself continual worry throughout the season, by receiving at the packing shed a large percentage of "finger-bruised" and "nail-cut" fruit that would otherwise have been perfect.

A peach should be picked, not with the points of the fingers and thumb pressed into it, but with the palm of the hand and the full length of the fingers around the fruit, thereby distributing what pressure there may be necessary over the whole peach, without producing finger bruises or nailcuts.

The eleven quart basket is the most popular size of package, each basket holding about fifteen popunds of fruit. Three layers of fruit in a basket of this size constitute a fair sample of first-class fruit. "Extra fine" and "Fancy" peaches are often packed two layers deep in what are called "Nine Quart" and "Six Quart" baskets, the former holding about twelve pounds of fruit, and the latter about eight. The "Nine Quart" is the same length and breadth as the "eleven," but shallower.

HOW TO ARRANGE

Fruit should be packed firmly and arranged so that they are slightly (though very slightly) above the level of the basket; they should be firm, but never squeezed into place. A basket too tightly packed is as serious a fault as one too loosely, though the latter is the commonest fault to be found in the handling of this crop.

A number of the fruit growers in the vicinity of Niagara ship by boat to Toronto, and they have devised what is known as the Leno-basket. The "Eleven Quart" basket is used for this purpose, the fruit being heaped well above the level of the basket, and instead of the usual basket lid, a leno covering is used. This is sewn to the top rim of the basket. The advantages claimed for these packages are: that they ship in better condition because they cannot be piled one above the other, but have to be placed upon shelves; that they sell more readily, the fruit being more attractive when packed in this manner, and that they bring a higher price on the market. The disadvantages are just those factors that are claimed as advantages: they cannot be piled one above the other, therefore they can only be carried where room will permit the use of shelves; where space is at a premium, as is often the case in fruit and express cars, the leno basket is at a great disadvantage; the higher price secured is very largely offset by the added amount of freight; and the leno covering is not as quickly put on as the basket cover. The use of this pack, therefore, is directly controlled by facilities of transportation, and even then can conveniently be used only on a limited scale.

A packing shed is a most necessary adjunct to a good orchard, and should be placed as near as possible to it. Four posts and a roof will answer the purpose, which is that of affording shade and cool air to the fruit as it is brought in from the orchard to be graded and packed. A portable shed, with shutters for windows, by which means ample ventilation can be secured, and provided with sloping packing benches, is a great asset in handling the fruit quickly and thoroughly during the rush of peach packing. All baskets full of fruit should be carried to the shed immediately, and there placed in the shade.

SMALL BASKETS

Several growers prefer using the small six quart basket for picking the fruit in the orchard, as there is less chance of bruising the fruit; the small baskets are more convenient when picking, and the fruit is more easily handled when brought to the shed for packing. It is a mistake, and one that is made by many, to think that a basket of peaches can be picked and packed at the same time. One man in ten might be able to do it, but for the other nine it is most necessary to see that the baskets are rearranged and packed before the covers are fastened on, and the grade of fruit marked on them.

Never before has the fruit industry of Ontario and the country been in a healthier state than it is to-day. This condition of affairs is due to numerous causes, but one of which I will mention