

GROWING GRAPES FOR HOME USE

In many parts of Canada where the summers are warm enough to ripen grapes but where the winters are too cold for them unless the vines are protected, grapes can be grown quite successfully for home use if the varieties best suited for such conditions are planted and if the special care which is required is given them. It is in the hope of inducing many persons to grow at least a few vines of this delicious fruit, who have not yet done so, that this circular is published.

Grapes do best in warm soil in the colder parts of Canada, and the vines should be planted where they will get full sunlight and, except in the districts where grapes are grown commercially and where there is usually a long enough season to ripen them thoroughly, the vines should be situated where they will have as high a temperature about them as possible, hence the south side of a building or wall is a good place in the coldest parts where growing grapes is attempted. Vines should be from nine to ten feet apart for best results and they may be planted in either spring or autumn. A two-year-old vine is best unless the one-year-old vine is very well rooted.

Outside the districts where grapes are grown commercially it is usually necessary to protect the vines in winter from the extreme cold or sudden and great changes of temperature, hence they must be covered with soil. Because of this a system of training and pruning is required which will permit of covering the vines with the least labour, and the following method is that followed at the Central Experimental Farm with much success for many years, although in some situations the fruit ripens sooner when the vines are grown under the Fan System.

When a young vine is planted it is cut back to near the ground, only two or three buds being left. If the vine is planted in the fall, sufficient soil should be put over it to prevent the cane being exposed during the winter. The vine should be planted a little deeper than it was in the nursery from which it came. After making the first season's growth it is cut back to one stem, which should be left only from six to nine inches in length when covered by soil just before winter sets in. It is important not to take the soil off in the spring until it is almost the time when the last frost is usually expected, as the shoots of grapes are very tender and a light frost will injure them and later on when the vines have reached bearing age the crop for the current season may be ruined by uncovering too soon. It is safer to leave the soil on until there begins to be danger of the buds or new growth being broken off when removing the soil. Two canes only are allowed to grow during the second season, and when long enough they should be tied to the lowest wire, which should be from 18 to 24 inches from the ground, and in this system the closer the canes spring from the ground the better. In the autumn these two canes are bent down and covered with soil as before, the entire vine being protected.

In the spring of the third season the canes or arms, as they are now called, are spread out in opposite directions and tied to the lower wires and three new wires should now be added each 18 inches apart. This year there will be canes grown upwards from the buds along the outstretched arms and a little fruit may set. The fruit on grape vines is borne near the base of the growing shoot which springs from the wood made in the previous year, hence it is desirable to prune the vine in such a way that strong shoots will be produced. During this third season laterals or side shoots should be pinched out and most of the upright shoots tied to the wires with raffia or some other soft material. As the ripening of the fruit will depend greatly on the amount of sunshine which the bunches of grapes receive, it is important to have the shoots well distributed and reduced in number sufficiently so that the fruit will get abundant sunlight.

In the autumn of the third year, just before winter sets in, the canes which have grown upright from the two arms should be cut back to near the arms, leaving only one bud on each cane in addition to the bud at the base of the cane. The two arms should, at the same time, be cut back so that there will be little more than forty buds