

PLANTING AND CARING FOR YOUNG TREES IN AN APPLE ORCHARD.



ONE of the first requisites to successful orcharding is to begin well. This bulletin briefly outlines for the guidance of intending planters some of the chief points which should be considered.

Location and Exposure.—In selecting the site for an orchard two of the main things to be sought for are exemption from late spring and early autumn frosts, and shelter from the prevailing high winds. The locations least subject to injurious frosts are those bordering large bodies of water, and, in the interior, the high lands. It is important to plant apple trees on the highest land available. If the elevation is not more than ten feet above the general level of the adjacent land, it affords an advantage in allowing the cold air to drain away into the lower levels, and lessens the danger from frosts, which often do great injury when the trees are in bloom. One of the worst locations is a sheltered valley from which there is little or no atmospheric drainage, and into which the sun shining makes it the hottest spot during the day, while the cold air settling into it from the higher elevations makes it the coldest spot during the night.

A free circulation of air is very desirable in an orchard, and a full exposure is better than shutting it in too closely, yet it is advisable to have the orchard somewhat sheltered from the full force of the prevailing winds. These in most parts of the country come from the south-west. The shelter, therefore, should be on that side, and may consist of a strip of woodland, or a belt of Norway spruce put out at the same time as the orchard, or best of all, if possible, plant the orchard on a hillside having a northern or north-eastern exposure. Such a location and exposure is least subject to sudden changes of temperature, drouth and the prevailing high winds.

The Soil and its Preparation.—Apples may be successfully grown on a great variety of soils, from a moderately light sand to a heavy clay. The best soil, however, is a deep, open, clayey loam, which should be well drained either naturally or artificially. In addition to this it should be moderately rich and retentive of plant food, for it is impossible to raise good fruit on poor soil.

To prepare the land for planting it should be plowed deeply in the fall and put in good condition in the spring, as if prepared for a hoed crop. If the sub-soil is a hard clay into which the roots of the trees cannot readily enter, it should be loosened up by means of a sub-soil plow. Where it is not convenient to treat the whole ground in this way, do a strip at least five or six feet wide where each row of trees is to stand, or when planting dig the holes much wider and deeper than would be otherwise necessary for planting.