

BARREN PLUM TREES.

An esteemed correspondent writes, "I have a number of plum trees old enough to bear fruit but which yield none. What plan would you recommend to promote or hasten fructification?"

It is well known to experienced fruit growers that the wood producing forces of a tree are in some degree antagonistic to the fruit producing, and hence when a tree is rapidly making wood it bears but little or no fruit. It may be that our correspondent's trees are in that condition, and that by reason of the richness of the soil, or the application of stimulating fertilizers, and that perhaps for a very different purpose, such as the growing of garden produce, the trees are kept in a condition of active growth, and hence its energies, so to speak, are exhausted in the production of wood and leaves instead of fruit. If this be the case, the remedy is to be sought in the use of some means whereby the tendency to produce wood may be checked. This can be done by withholding fertilizers, if any have been applied, either to the tree or to the soil within reach of the roots. If the soil be naturally so rich as to produce strong wood growth, or it be inconvenient to cease using the ground within reach of the roots for garden purposes, the growth of the tree may be checked by digging a trench around the tree at a sufficient distance from the trunk to prevent too severe a shock to its growth, and to a sufficient depth to cut off the feeding roots, and so diminish the supply of stimulating food. This check to the growth of a tree will often at once produce a change, and throw it into bearing. The like effect is sometimes produced by bending down the limbs, and fastening them in a horizontal position. This checks the rapid upward flow of the sap and induces the formation of fruit buds. Another method, but one that requires much care lest permanent injury result therefrom, is to bind some ligature tightly around some of the branches, and in this way hinder the flow of the sap sufficiently to arrest the rapid growth and induce fruiting. Such ligatures will need to be carefully watched, and not allowed to remain long enough to injure the limbs by cutting too deeply.

Some varieties of plum, apple, pear, &c., do not come to fruit bearing age as early as others, and though the trees may seem large enough to bear large crops, they have not yet reached that degree of maturity requisite to the production of fruit. The Northern Spy Apple tree