

Grape Vine Culture, No. VI.

BY W. S. WOBURN.

THE SORTS TO PLANT.

THERE are many varieties of native vines, some more or less suitable to various localities, from the extreme South to the furthest limit of northern latitude where the grape will grow profitably. A very limited number of these sorts are more particularly suitable for our northern climate. The Fruit Grower's Association of Upper Canada have agreed on four sorts as the very best, and we approve of their selection. In THE CANADA FARMER for April 1, 1861, page 93, we described several of those suitable for the Northern States, as well as Canada, and in order that new subscribers to THE FARMER for the present year may have the information, and that old subscribers may have it at hand, we repeat the brief descriptions there given of the four varieties approved by the Association:

CLINTON.

This is a vigorous and exceedingly hardy and productive variety. Bunches medium size, very compact; berries small to medium; colour black; flesh rather acid, with an exceedingly brisk and sprightly flavour; ripens middle to end of September, two weeks earlier than the Isabella.

CONCORD.

Bunches and berries very large, almost black, thickly covered with beautiful bloom, very hardy, second only to Delaware, and exceedingly vigorous and productive; much less liable to mildew than either the Isabella or Catawba. Similar in quality to the Isabella, but ripens two weeks earlier.

DELAWARE.

This is exceedingly hardy, early and productive; perhaps the very best of all the hardy American varieties. It is very delicate, sweet, sprightly, and of high vinous flavour. It has been known to stand the severest northern winters, beside which the Isabella and Catawba were killed out. It ripens fully three weeks earlier than the Isabella.

HARTFORD PROLIFIC.

Bunches large and compact; berries large, round; skin thick and black, very juicy and sweet. An exceedingly hardy and productive variety. Ripens two weeks before the Isabella.

WHO SHOULD PLANT.

Every person who owns land should plant more or less of the grape vine who may desire a profitable crop, and who may at the same time be willing to bestow the necessary care and attention to their cultivation. But we remind all such, that to produce the best results constantly, vigilance will be required. Nothing must be left to chance; plans must be matured in advance; the location must be a proper one; the ground must be very carefully prepared, extreme depth of trenching and very heavy manuring is in most cases unnecessary, in many instances injurious; there must be a proper exposure to the sun, proper shelter provided against tearing winds, sedulous care must be exercised in teaching, to prevent frost injuring the roots in winter, and to ensure proper humidity during the droughts of summer. The greatest care and pains must be taken to train, pinch, and prune correctly. And as no written instructions, without some actual practice will be sufficient, with at least the majority of mankind, it is recommended that caution be exercised not to plant very extensively, until after a few years practical experience may be had. Of course mistakes, losses, and failures more or less will have to be encountered in the first instance, but ample success will finally reward untiring painstaking, and indomitable perseverance: if there be those who may think all these conditions too hard to be attempted, we do not advise such persons to try grape growing.

Culture of the Cranberry.

We have had some enquiries on the above subject, and by way of giving a full and exhaustive reply to them, we make the following extracts from a circular issued by B. M. Watson, of the Old Colony Nurseries, Plymouth, Mass., one of the most successful cultivators of the Cranberry, in the United States.

"The success of this fine fruit in upland garden cultivation is now completely established. In fact

its cultivation is much more easy, economical and successful in the dry soils of Private Gardens, Market Gardens, and in field culture, than in the usual clammy way in bogs and meadows. It requires no more moisture than is contained in all arable land. The plantations at this establishment are on dry sandy loam, and the yield the last season, under my improved method of culture, was over 400 bushels per acre, or more than double the ordinary crop in meadows. The fruit is larger, darker colored, more solid, and of better quality than the wild fruit, and ripens earlier and more thoroughly, being exposed to the sun and air more thoroughly. The great danger of being cut off by September frosts is entirely obviated in my method, as the fruit nestles in among the leaves, entirely protected from the frosts, so that it may remain on the vines till there is danger of the ground freezing. Common early frosts do no injury whatever. Fruit left on all winter is equally good with those "Spring Cranberries" picked in the bogs in April and so highly esteemed.

The Cranberry is a hardy trailing evergreen shrub, found both in swamps and on high land, but is most productive on upland, sandy loam, well enriched. Although it is commonly thought that it naturally grows only in wet land, nothing is more common than to find luxuriant patches of the Cranberry in every variety of upland soil. Cole, in recommending its cultivation in his excellent "Fruit Book" says: "Where a gravelly knoll has been reduced for a road, we saw excellent cranberries growing on a dry, hard and poor soil. On another spot we saw fine fruit by the roadside, on a very poor, dry, hard soil." He adds, "with these cases of good crops under every disadvantage, it would be surprising if cranberries should not grow well on high land, under good culture."

In England and in many parts of Europe, according to London, our American Cranberry has been found in gardens for nearly two centuries. A recent correspondent of the "Genesee Farmer" says: "My cranberry garden is on sandy loam. Before being cleared, it was timbered with hemlock, beech and maple, after being cleared, the natural growth was sorrel, June grass and white clover. When cultivated, it produced good crops of potatoes and oats. My opinion is, that almost any soil that is not inclined to grass over without seeding, will grow full crops of cranberries. I prepare the ground by plowing deep—bringing as much of the sub-soil on top as I can. Harrow and work as for corn." A writer in the "Maine Farmer" says his crop grown on loam in 1863, "was at the rate of 453 bushels per acre." Other statements of the kind by experienced cultivators may be constantly met with in the leading Horticultural Journals, showing how rapidly the cultivation of this plant is extending.

GARDEN CULTIVATION.—Prepare the ground by deep ploughing, or spading, and enrich it well in the usual way, or with a compost of two parts swamp muck and one part wood ashes. Bone dust is an excellent application, say one pound to the square yard. In April, May or June, or in October and November set the plants four inches apart, in rows six inches asunder, in beds four feet wide. Two square rods will yield four or five bushels and require 2000 plants. The vines will soon cover the ground, and require no renewal, as the plant is a perennial shrub. The Cranberry is one of the best plants for garden edgings, or for broad belts, or borders for the principal walks. It is easily trimmed and kept in order, and is always attractive, in bloom, or in fruit, and being an evergreen in winter. For edgings plant six inches apart in double rows four inches asunder. For belts and borders which may be one half to two feet wide, plant as above directed for beds. As soon as it is known how easily every family may grow its own cranberries the cultivation of this wholesome fruit will be introduced into every garden. It is in eating from September to June.

FOR MARKET GARDENS AND FIELD CULTURE.—Prepare the ground by thorough ploughing and manuring as in garden cultivation. New and virgin soils will not require any dressing. During the months of April, May and June, or in October and November, set the plants five or six inches apart, in double rows, three feet asunder. These double rows are to be four inches apart, and the plants should be set as a hedge thus:

There being nearly three feet of space between the rows the ground can be kept clear by the horse-hoe, at small expense. In a year or two the ground will be sodded over, when further cultivation will be unnecessary. Sixty thousand plants are required per acre. The usual crop on old exhausted soils appear to be about 400 bushels per acre. I have no doubt, however, that on new and fertile soils, the yield could be easily carried up to 600 bushels, or even 800 bushels. As the fruit is worth \$3 to \$4 per bushel, it is the most profitable fruit grown.

FOR SWAMP CULTURE.—The mode of planting is the same as above; but of course the preparation of the ground must depend upon the condition and character of the swamp. The great point in swamp cultivation is to make the land as dry as possible. Mr. Plancy in his excellent paper, in the Report of the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture for 1863, says: "If the ground cannot be drained at least eighteen inches below the general surface, the situation must be rejected." It is much better to plant on dry ground and avoid the heavy expense of draining.

THE TREE CAPE COP VARIETY, is by far the best in cultivation, and succeeds best in uplands. There are several sorts in the market known as "the Bell," "the Cherry," and many other fancy names which do not compare with this in real, practical value.

PROPAGATION is simple and easy, by layering in August. Cover the now rapidly growing vines with an inch or two of soil, and they root at once making perfect plants for the next season. It is an easy plant to transplant, and is entirely hardy in the coldest climate, without covering.

GATHERING THE CROPS.—In October before cold weather, the crop may be raked by the common cranberry rake, or gathered by hand. Children can earn from 50 to 75 cents per day by picking them, at one cent per quart.

FAIR PLANTING.—October and November are the best months for full planting. Prepare the ground well in September and set the plants as above directed. Before winter sets in, protect by ploughing a furrow directly over the plants, and in garden culture by strewing dung or leaves, &c., over them. When well established, however, they need no covering whatever.

Miscellaneous.

Agricultural Societies.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—I was pleased to see the reply of "J. N.," of Springfield, in your 1st No., vol. II, in regard to your remarks in the "double number," headed "Township versus County Fairs," as I wished to see this subject fully discussed.

I agree with you, Sir, that we have too many petty Exhibitions, exhausting our time, creating too much expense in their management, and weakening our efforts for any practical or profitable results. "J. N." has given us some very strong arguments in favour of "Township Societies," which cannot be refuted; but he has suggested no remedy for the evils of which we complain. Township Fairs, certainly give an opportunity for all to exhibit with less trouble; but there is very little honour and satisfaction in obtaining prizes where there is little or no competition. It is true that the "spoils" are more thoroughly distributed; but the resources of the country are not properly developed by such feeble efforts.

I have watched the working of nearly all the Agricultural Societies in the county where I reside, and, but for one or two exceptions, should be prepared to vote for their discontinuance. Four or five, perhaps more, of the Township Fairs have made no progress the last ten years; some have retrograded; while one, at least, has made such progress as to be equal to the average of County Fairs in Canada West; surpassing, both in membership and influence, the County Show of the Riding in which it is situated. This convinces me that we cannot have an Agricultural Act, so constructed, as to meet every circumstance. The township I have referred to, takes no interest whatever in the County Society, being far from the county town, where the County Show is always held; hence, I presume, the principal cause of its success from the first, and its constant progress is induced by the special interest taken in agricultural improvement by the whole township,—a feeling peculiar to but few localities; and deserving careful culture.

I have thought of various plans to remedy the evil. First, would it be better to abolish the County Societies, and let the townships have all the "spoils" and thus render them more effective in their operations? Second, would it not be better to raise the standard of membership to one hundred, instead of