

HEDGES.



IN the Fruit Growers' Association Report of 1892, D. Nicol discourses upon "Hedges." I need not repeat what he has so well said in that article. There are pros and cons in respect to hedges, as there are in respect to any style of fence. The cost of hedge plants is a mere trifle. Fifteen to twenty-five cents will purchase good plants for a rod of honey locust hedge. About five times as much will purchase plants for an arbor vitæ hedge. To plant these in prepared ground along the straight side of a straight furrow, is a short job. The annual expense is not great, but it must be considered.

I like to leave a wide, cultivated border, and run a corn cultivator along each side half a dozen times each year for some few years at least. This, with the necessary hoeing, costs but little. The hedge should be cut back each spring; after a few years we use hedge shears once or twice each year. This job is best done after a sharp shower, which perchance prevents for a time the usual work on the farm. I find it so attractive that I rarely give up the shears till noon. He who is not prepared to give his hedge attention from time to time each year should not plant one at all.

The most serious objection to a hedge is the fact that its roots unfit the adjacent lands for many crops. Grass crops and pasture are not much affected. A hedge separating a road or a lane from a pasture field is therefore quite admissible. Where a head land is used as a driveway, or to turn upon with a cultivator, a hedge answers very well. At the rear of my place a honey locust hedge separates my head land from a lane which is much used by cattle. The plants stand upright, and having been pretty well cared for and sheared, there has been no need of tipping or bending them sideways in the hedge. To make assurance doubly sure, we have stretched one barbed wire within the hedge, three feet above the ground. Each and every cow has seriously considered the matter, and concluded not to go through that hedge.

Hedges have some advantages. Their cost, including annual care, is not great, while they endure for a long time. They are wind proof, and make a low wind break. They are beautiful and interesting; with one or two barbed wires they are an effective fence. I have for years used a locust fence along the road without any wires. A hedge is not reliable if planted near to a row of trees such as we often see along road sides. Try the hedge in one place and the trees in some other place.

Mr. Nicol makes one serious mistake. The honey locust is not possessed of sprouting proclivities. In this respect it is as virtuous as the ordinary forest trees. We have in Stamford Township a good many miles of honey locust hedge of various ages. Although planted upon hard clay much of it is very good fence. Where much neglected it has but little of beauty or utility. The men, rather than the fence, are at fault in the latter case.