

Salem Will Be the Market, Shipping and Banking Center of Perhaps 100,000,000 Pounds of Prunes Next Year; and this Will Increase Fast to 500,000,000 Pounds

SALEM PERMANENT CAPITAL OF THE OREGON PRUNE INDUSTRY

And it is a Great Industry, and Climbing Towards Possible Annual Yields of a Half Billion Pounds of Dried Prunes, and There is no Reason to be Discouraged Because Rain Caused Great Losses

This reporter said a year ago, in the Salem slogan issue on prunes, Oct. 16, that he was "full of prunes." After a year, he can repeat that he is fuller of prunes.

Notwithstanding the fact that there have been great losses to prune growers here on account of the unseasonable and heavy rains during the harvest.

Earl estimates gave the Oregon crop for 1920 at 60,000,000 to 80,000,000 pounds of dried prunes—and in the Oregon yield is always included that of Clarke county, Washington.

The green prunes were on the trees.

"And the rain was upon the earth, forty days and forty nights," as in Noah's time—almost. It rained a good deal more than usual in September and October—and the hopes of the prune men were sadly dampened.

The rains cut down the yield of dried prunes for this district for 1920 to perhaps 30,000,000 pounds. Some say to 25,000,000, and for 1919 about 60,000,000. There was a short crop in 1919, owing to frosts, shortage of labor, etc., but the prices ranged high, and many growers made large profits.

This year, part of the shortage is due to short weight in drying; they have dried down to about 14 pounds to the 60 pound bushel, whereas they usually run as high as 22 pounds to the bushel of green fruit.

Adding to this the fact that the costs of picking and drying were

excessive, owing to the rain, the growers have not come off very well, on the average. They had to pay 10 to 12 cents, and even up to 20 cents a bushel for picking, and none of the labor came up to 100 per cent efficiency, on account of bad weather conditions.

And the outlook for high prices for the growers is not overly bright—though some of the medium sizes are now selling at around 11 to 13 cents a pound in bulk, and the Oregon Growers Cooperative association has put a price of 17 cents a pound on 30's, 15 1/2 cents on 40-50's, and 13 cents on 50-60's, in boxes, packed and labeled, etc.

And there will be a demand for all the Oregon prunes, at good prices; and there will be no slump, unless the market is forced.

If the owners of the prunes will play a waiting game, feeding the prunes to the consumers as they are needed, all will be well—for all the crop saved.

But the prunes spoiled by the rains and the high cost of picking and drying can not be retrieved. The growers may as well forget it, and face the future cheerfully.

As to the district as a whole, the outlook is a good deal of money come from the outside for the 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 pounds saved and now going to and being gotten ready for the markets. In Douglas county, the crop was practically all saved; but it was not a full crop there, owing to late frosts.

What Of The Future?

The Salem slogan editor said last year, "Within four years this district will market at least 100,000,000 pounds of dried prunes; and the Salem banks will finance and Salem concerns will market pretty well up towards 100 per cent of them, from the present outlook."

The 100,000,000 mark ought to be reached in half that time. In 1921, with all conditions favorable, and the 200,000,000 mark is not far away; nor the half billion mark, either.

The Oregon state tax commission has just completed a summary of agricultural and horticultural statistics for 1920. This summary gives in acres of bearing prunes for Marion county, 6,907; Polk county, 3,883.75; Yamhill county, 3,963.75; and for the three counties in the order named, not yet bearing, 1974, 3,042.75 and 3,241.75, or 14,755 acres bearing and 8,078.50 not yet bearing of prune trees for these three counties, with 25,222.75 acres bearing and 13,657.50 not yet bearing for the whole state, or a total for Oregon of 38,880.25 acres in prunes already. Make it 40,000 acres in full—and it is more, for the writer knows of facts that make it certain that the report is not complete.

Well, County Fruit Inspector S. H. Van Trump, of Marion county, says a young prune orchard ought to yield better than a ton and a half of dried fruit to the acre, and full grown orchards ought to yield five tons, in this locality.

Multiply 40,000 acres by 10,000 pounds, and you have 400,000,000 pounds, for Oregon alone—not including Clarke county, Washington.

And prunes are going out in the Salem district as fast as trees may be had from the nurseries. Trees used to be 10 cents each. Last year they sold as high as 75 cents, and 50 to 60 cents is being talked of right now.

As at present planted, 108 trees are needed for an acre. So the cost of a new orchard is something.

But they will still go out—and we are going fast to the half billion pound prune crop for the Salem district, including southern Oregon and Clarke county, Washington.

Even for the Oregon crop only. This is the best prune district in the world, and our people have learned a great deal about growing and curing and sending to the market the best prunes produced

in the world; and they are constantly learning more.

So Salem is the permanent prune capital of the world, and it will profit enormously from this distinction and this fact year after year.

Some Things Needed Before leaving this subject, the following words printed in last year's slogan page ought to be printed and read:

"County Fruit Inspector S. H. Van Trump, of Marion county, told the writer yesterday that the old prune orchards of this district, most of them at least, need three things:

1. Thorough pruning.
2. Fertilizer.
3. Spraying.

"Not one of the three should

be neglected. And, fourth and always, of course, good tillage.

"In the past three or four years, during war times and consequent shortage of labor, some or all of these things have been neglected by prune growers.

"Mr. Van Trump says Providence has been trusted to, much of late, without being backed up with brains and brawn. (At least he said something to that effect—and he was right.)

"He says land that is good for prunes may be had here for \$75 to \$200 an acre—owing to distance from market.

"In fact, there is no better prune district on earth, and our marketing conditions are absolutely the best."

PRICES OF PRUNE LANDS IN SALEM DISTRICT ARE LOW

There May Be Some Changes in the Near Future at Sacrifice Prices, But This Condition Will Not Last Long

(The following article was written for this prune slogan issue of The Statesman by Knight Peary, of Peary Bros., horticulturists, who are engaged in developing several walnut and prune and other farms in this district, and whose offices are in the Oregon building in Salem.)

The rather disastrous prune season which we have just passed through serves to emphasize the need of a certain amount of diversification even among those who grow the prune as a major crop.

We all feel sorry for the grower who stakes his all on a crop of prunes or of cherries and is hit by an untimely rain, just as we feel sorry for the farmer who has planted his whole acreage in potatoes and is hit by a heavy freeze before digging time.

It is seldom happens that all the crops fail the same year, or that prices are low on all of them the same season. Too, the labor problem is less of a problem to the two or three-crop man than to the single crop man, who

can give employment to a large number of hands, but a short period of the year. While we do not expect prices of prune properties to decrease greatly, still there will probably be some orchards offered at very attractive prices during the next few months. Some buyers who purchased on "a shoe string," expecting the crop of the present season to pay out for them will have to let go. Then, there are those who have been discouraged for the time being because of the loss of a crop and will offer their orchards at a material loss to themselves to insure a sale.

These cuts in price will be but temporary. We find that the better class of prune orchards are not put high when we begin to compare prices here with those elsewhere. California prune orchards that yield no more per acre than ours sold at \$1000 per acre and upwards, even before the war prices began to be realized for dried fruits.

Surely our orchards are worth as much now as were the California plantings before the war. Clarke county, Wash., prune orchards have been changing hands at \$1500 per acre. It is not necessary that an orchard yield a profit of \$300 to \$400 per acre in order to make it a good investment at \$800 to \$1000 per acre. We do not have to receive wartime prices for our fruit in order to justify purchases at these figures. Neither should the loss of a crop be a part of this year's crop discourage the investment in Oregon prune orchards. California growers lost from 50 per cent upwards of their immense crop of 1918 without lowering the sales value of their orchards.

THE "NEW OREGON" PRUNE IS A CANDIDATE FOR POPULARITY

It is a Cross Between the Italian and French Varieties, and It Seems Destined for Many Purposes to Exceed Either in the Favor of the Markets of the World

(The following article appeared in the Pacific Homestead, the farm paper published from the Statesman building, in its issue of September 30.)

Andrew Vercler has announced to the world that he has developed a superiority over any other now grown commercially, and is ready to place it on the market.

The new prune has been named the "New Oregon," and is a cross between the Italian and the French or Petite prune. It has the general characteristics, including color, shape and sweetness of the Petite prune, while it grows considerably larger than the Italian, and has a free pit, that causes it to dry much quicker and more uniform than the Italian prune. In fact, Mr. Vercler stated that New Oregon prunes size 40-50s had been placed in the drier along with 80-90s of the old variety, and had come out nicely dried in the same time.

The fact that the prune is much

sweeter than the Italian, although not containing as much sugar as the Petite, will make it a popular prune on the market, as less sugar is required in serving. The principal commercial prune of California is the Petite, which has been outdone by the Italian, familiarly known as the Oregon prune, because of the much larger size of the latter. Californians have spent vast sums of money in experimenting in the attempt to produce a prune adapted to the climate and attaining the size of the Oregon prune, but without success, and it seems that Mr. Vercler has accomplished this result. It is probable that the New Oregon will never prove as popular as the Italian, for the reason that they have learned to love the taste of their favorite home grown prune, not possessed by either the Italian or the New Oregon. But it is neither as sweet as the Petite or as tart as the Italian, and with its large size should top the markets of the world.

Mr. Vercler chose a unique and

hospitable method of introducing his prune to the public. He invited leading horticulturalists, packers, growers and newspapermen from all over the state to visit his orchard and inspect the prune. The party gathered at the Marion hotel at 10 o'clock and drove to the orchard of Mr. Vercler's son-in-law, V. L. Gibson, in the Polk county hills five miles northwest of Salem. There they found 500 trees of the new prune, of which about 50 are in full bearing and loaded with purple fruit. The trees stand in the midst of a large orchard of Italian prunes, so a splendid opportunity for comparison was afforded.

The prunes contain 1234 purple and more red than the Italian, but the characteristic that struck the visitors most forcibly was the tough skin of the new fruit, and its perfect condition in this unusual rainy season when the crop of Italian prunes is so badly damaged. Although the prunes are ripe and dropping to the ground, very few cracked prunes were found, while the Italians growing alongside showed from one-fourth to one-third cracked fruit, some of them cracked wide open and the pits dropped out. The crop seemed to be uniformly large, of a size that would dry 30-40, and 40-50, and the usual proportion of small prunes that is found in crops of Italians.

Luncheon Served Visitors The party returned to the Marion hotel where Mr. Vercler served luncheon to the visitors, including some of the new dried prunes from last year's crop, and they were found as delicious to

the taste and as pleasing to the eye as when growing on the trees.

Mr. Vercler explained that he had tried for years to produce a new prune by cross pollinating the Petite upon the Italian, but had failed. In 1913 he discovered a seedling growing in a fence corner of his orchard near Eola, in which both Petite and Italian prunes were growing, the fruit of which proved to be superior to any other in his orchard and was manifestly the very cross he had been striving for. When he sold his place he brought this tree with him, and from it has grafted the stock to set out 500 trees on Mr. Gibson's place and 500 on his own place in Marion county north of Salem.

Portland Men Attend

Among those at the dinner were M. McDonald and John McGee or the Oregon Nursery of Oremco; Mr. Brownell, a Portland nurseryman; Charles L. Dick, manager of the prune ranch of Mason Ehrman & Co.; Carl Abrams, editor of The Pacific Homestead; Walter Jenks, manager of the Willamette Valley Prune association; William McGilchrist, Jr., and J. R. Linn of Salem and a number of farmers and prune growers. They all expressed their emphatic opinion that the new prune possesses characteristics that make a far more valuable commercial product than any of the older varieties.

The Oregon Nursery company is preparing to handle the new prune, and more this winter and have them ready to place on the market a year later.

"MISTLAND" WILL GREET THREE MILLION PEOPLE DAILY

That Brand of Oregon Prunes Will be Made Known to the People of the East Through a Fifty Thousand Dollar Advertising Campaign, to be Conducted by the Honig-Cooper Company

(The Oregon Growers' Co-operative association, with headquarters in the Masonic building, Salem, is commencing an intensive advertising campaign of Oregon prunes.

"Mistland," the trade name some time ago adopted by the association for the first class of Oregon prunes, will be used, and the word MISTLAND will be fixed in the minds of millions of people by means of repetition. They will see it in the street cars of the elevated lines, the subways and the surface roads; and they will see it in the magazines and newspapers. No one will be able to miss MISTLAND. The following circular, dated October 5, 1920, from Prof. C. I. Lewis, manager of the organization department of the association, gives information concerning this advertising campaign and other matters.)

The Oregon Growers' Co-operative association has chosen the Honig-Cooper advertising agency of San Francisco to conduct a campaign of advertising the Oregon prune.

Probably approximately \$50,000 will be spent this year in getting a greater consumption of our Oregon prunes.

Up to the present time the Oregon prune has had a very limited distribution. Many markets do not receive it at all and are in some cases restricted to certain classes. In the interest of the industry, the American people must be given an opportunity to become acquainted with the real merits of Oregon prunes. Mr. Honig of the Honig-Cooper agency has had more experience in the advertising and distribution of prunes than any other man in America. For four years he has conducted a prune campaign and as a result the California prune association this past season sold practically their entire crop of "Sunset" prunes within a few hours, handling over 100,000,000 pounds in one day, at the highest average prices received on the Pacific coast for this season.

This was due to no small degree to the intelligent advertising

which Mr. Honig conducted.

It is interesting to note that the second brand handled by the California association had no orders at the same time that this avalanche of orders for the advertised brand appeared. Although the prices on this brand was 1-2 cent per pound under the advertised Sunset brand.

One of the lines of advertising which the Oregon Growers' association will introduce this year, is the use of posters on the elevated and subway lines of New York, where 3,000,000 people daily will constantly see the word "MISTLAND." This type of advertising has brought remarkable results to "Skokum" apples, Hood River apples, and other food products.

During the recent rains, the field department has given very fine service. The growers have been taken care of within reason, and practically none of them have lost heavily because of the lack of drying space. Had it not been for the large evaporators which the association has built this year, the loss would have been terrific. But by using their own dryers, and by seeing that every member had drying space, they have saved a much larger percentage of the crop than is true of the outside growers. They have been instrumental in helping many a grower get pickers when he was in desperate straits. Work is now starting in the packing plants, and the association is rolling cars for early deliveries. A good steady business is being done by the sales department, and a very gratifying export business has been developed. In the fresh fruit packing plants, the fall prunes are being rapidly sold at the highest average prices ever received in the state. Varieties of apples such as Gravenstein, King and Winter Banana have been largely moved and the plants are now busy handling Jonathans, Spitzenburg and other early winter varieties. The new apple packing plant has been opened in Garden Valley near Roseburg, and is packing of great bush to the apple growers of that district. New apple packing plants are also being opened at Forest Grove and Sheridan.

There is considerable controversy, especially in the western section, as to the best locations for prune orchards. Some men prefer the bottom lands, either the sandy loams along the rivers, or the stronger clay soils. The contention is that these lower elevations produce larger prunes and a greater yield. Another set of growers, however, stoutly maintain that the rolling hills are the only places for prunes, and while their fruit is smaller, nevertheless, it is heavier and sweeter, and their orchards are more reliable. East of the mountains the prunes are generally planted in the silt loams.

Since all plum trees blossom in early spring, they are very subject to loss from frosts and cold rains. To offset the loss from frosts, the southern and eastern exposures should be avoided, since the thawing out on such exposures is very rapid, leading to a breakdown of the tissues.

When planted on the lighter loams, the peach root is preferred but on the stronger loams, plum roots are preferable. As yet not enough investigation has been conducted to determine what species of plum roots are the most desirable for the various localities.

On the lighter soils, or higher elevations, the trees are planted from 18 to 20 feet apart, but on the stronger loams, from 20 to 22 feet should be allowed. Some growers claim that on extremely rich soils, 25 feet is a more desirable distance.

The tillage given prunes is very similar to that given other deciduous fruits grown in the northwest. In all young orchards the tillage should be very thorough for the first three years. With trees not in bearing, tillage should cease by the middle of July. In many of the bearing orchards, where the tillage has been very thorough in the early spring months, sufficient vigor of tree and size of fruit is often obtained so that tillage can be discontinued by the middle of July or the first of August. In many of the orchards it will be necessary to continue the tillage up to about the time of harvest, which comes later, varying from the first of August to the middle of September.

Formerly, the trees were all headed from 30 to 40 inches in height. In more recent years, however, many growers are heading from 20 to 24 inches and producing very satisfactory trees.

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THE HISTORY AND THE HABITS AS KNOWN HERE OF THE PRUNE

The Industry Has Lately Become a Stable and Reliable One, With Established Methods; But There Are Many Improvements Yet to be Made to Render It Most Profitable

(The following are liberal excerpts from Circular 15 of the Oregon Agricultural college, on "Prunes in the Pacific Northwest," the date being April, 1917, and the author being Prof. C. I. Lewis, at that time head of the division of horticulture at that institution.)

Prune culture in the Pacific northwest has had a very checkered career. The early pomologist took a great deal of interest in plums and prunes because of the magnitude of the products produced, and the ease with which they were grown. This interest increased up to the early nineties, when the prune reached a boom period. Thousands of acres were planted in a few years. They were planted on all kinds of soils and exposures, and a great many varieties were tried. Towards the latter part of the nineties there was a tremendous production of the fruit, mostly of a questionable value. Few men knew how to evaporate prunes properly. Much of the product decayed in transit, while some was evaporated so hard as to be practically inedible. There was little or no market for the dried tart prunes; consequently there was but one inevitable result; namely, a collapse, and in a few years thousands of acres of trees were taken out. The United States census shows there were nearly a million less prune trees in the state of Oregon in 1910 than were growing in 1900. About 1905 the industry began to pick up. Those growers who had good locations and proper varieties, and who had mastered the process of evaporation began to find a market. This market has steadily improved, until in the last seven or eight years the prune has proved to be a very profitable crop, either shipped green, or evaporated. The increase in acreage the past four years has been very large, and the industry now seems to be thoroughly established. The United States census for 1910 shows the following figures:

No. of trees. Yield, bu.
Oregon . . . 1,784,896 1,747,587
Washington . . . 923,982 1,023,977
Idaho . . . 302,855 179,087

There are two distinct areas in which the prunes of the northwest are produced: Western Oregon and Washington. In this section prunes are grown entirely for evaporation, the conditions here being strong loamy soils and abundant rainfall. East of the mountains the prunes are grown very largely in the irrigated valleys, although some of the dry farming areas are producing splendid fruit. In these districts the prunes are rarely evaporated, but are shipped out in the fresh condition to eastern markets where they are generally known as plums.

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The same general principles which apply to the pruning of apple trees also apply to the prune. Care should be taken to have the main scaffold limbs spaced as far apart as possible. Strong heading back is necessary the first few years. With many orchards, summer pruning can be conducted advantageously, the pruning being done largely in June and consisting of cutting back of the terminals to the point where it is desirable to force out new laterals. Occasionally a little thinning out of the laterals is practiced. When the trees reach their heavy bearing, which is about the seventh year, it is desirable to give the trees moderate pruning annually, the aim being to keep the trees well supplied with strong one and two year old wood, as the large plums are found almost invariably on the vigorous wood. Where orchards have been allowed to run down somewhat, it is often found desirable to thin out the spurs with hand shears, and in this way reinvigorate the remaining spurs. Where trees are very much run down, the most satisfactory treatment will probably be to remove them, forcing out a new vigorous top which, in from three to four years, will produce commercial crops of fruit.

Very little hand thinning is done with plums and prunes in the Pacific northwest. The Italian prunes generally thin themselves. Some varieties of plums, however, must have hand-thinning.

Very little work has been done as yet with manures or fertilizers. Commercial fertilizers, where tried, have never given striking results in the older orchards. The growers are finding that, in the older orchards, a stable composition is very desirable. Where it is impossible to secure such material, vetch or rye planted the latter part of August or early September, and plowed under in the early spring is very beneficial. Care has to be taken, however, not to use excessive amounts of nitrogen, as this element tends to make the trees unproductive and generally makes the skin of the prune so heavy that it is difficult to evaporate.

The prune industry in the Pacific northwest is not old enough as yet to demonstrate how long an orchard will remain profitable. We know, however, that there are several orchards in the state which have been producing for a limited extent are the French, locally called the Petite or Prune d'Acen, the Pacific, Willamette, Clairac, Mammoth, Columbia, Tennant, Silver and Sugar. There is, of course, to be found scattered over the northwest a miscellaneous list of soft prunes that are grown largely as local fruit.

Since the Italian prune is benefited by growing in other varieties, there will probably always be a scattering of other varieties planted in our orchards. Many growers report that wherever the Italians are near other varieties, a more satisfactory set of fruit is obtained on the Italian. In the evaporated fruit districts the Petite will be the predominant variety. The greatest drawback of this prune is its small size. It, however, dries heavier than the Italian, and, size for size, sells somewhat higher.

Where prunes are to be shipped in their green state for eating fresh in the eastern markets, it is customary to pick the fruit while it is still very hard and green. The plums will, however, have developed to a very large extent their true color before the picking is undertaken.

The fruit, when properly refrigerated, has not only been shipped all over the United States but successful shipments have also been made to Europe, Mexico and Alaska. Where the fruit is to be evaporated, it is first allowed to ripen on the trees and should not be gathered until it drops naturally to the ground, or will drop with very little shaking. The fruit is picked up from the ground in bushel boxes, the pickers going through the orchard every few days to gather up the fruit. The yield will vary tremendously, from 1000 to 8000 pounds per acre. As soon as the fruit is gathered, it should be hauled to the evaporators and evaporated quickly in order to avoid brown rot which often spreads rapidly in the containers. There are two main types of

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FIVE ACRE NUT OR BERRY TRACTS

Supplement your regular income by owning a small fruit tract.

We care for it for you. See us about buying one now. Limited number tracts for sale.

PEARCY BROS., Oregon Building Salem

BEEMAN ONE-HORSE TRACTOR

\$325—SALEM ROACH & TROVER Liberty Garage, 444 Ferry St.

40 ACRES, ALL IN CROP. MODERN 7-room new bungalow with basement, fireplace, bath, toilet, electric lights and water in all buildings, barn with 20 cow stalls, two silos, all new wire fenced, lays well on gravel road close to paved road, walking distance of Oregon state normal school, well located and a fine home for \$14,500; half of the crop goes. Terms and possession can be arranged to suit.

BOARDING AND LODGING HOUSE DOING ALL business, completely furnished and capable of sleeping and boarding 60 persons, located in good town in best location. Price for equipment, furniture and building, \$7500. Terms can be arranged. See Sociodolphy, 341 State Street, Salem, Phone 970.

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Corner High and Ferry Sts., SALEM

We move anything. Also making through trips to Portland and return. We also do local hauling.

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Car Lot Shippers of Potatoes

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