Among the Orchards of the Northwest

A Page of Interesting Advice and Information About Fruits, Large and Small.

The big problem the orchardist faces these days, and it is a problem for commercial purposes, as part of his work, is the disposal of his crop. Mr. Stephens has a few ideas well worth considering on how to obtain the maximum cash yield from apple orchards.

BY E. F. STEPHENS.

THE commercial apple orchardist is often asked by his friends, "Do you hope to find room to market all the apples you are growing?" In my own case I expect to produce in a single season three hundred to four hundred car loads of apples from the orchards in my care.

What are the conditions surrounding the future market of the commercial apple? Recently, in Lincoln, Neb., I found Ben Davis grown in Kansas selling at wholesale for $6 a barrel. Jonathans at $6.50 a barrel, and other varieties in barrels at similar prices. Western box apples, wholesale, are selling at $2.25 to $2.75 a box. The Yakima Fruit Growers' Union is selling Winesaps f. o. b. Yakima, Wash., at $2.25 a box. These prices are extraordinary, and arise from the fact that the crop of apples for 1913 in the United States with boxes computed in barrels, was only 25,000,000 barrels as against 45,000,000 barrels for the crop of 1912.

Production on Increase.

The average production of the United States for the last ten years has fallen to not far from 30,000,000 barrels annually. Whenever the crop falls below 40,000,000 barrels the commercial grower may be sure of good prices for his apples, if properly grown, packed and marketed.

On the streets, my friends tell me that oranges are as cheap as apples, that while the consumption of oranges is up to the limit of production, the orange does not take the place of the apple. The apple can be eaten for many months in the year and can be cooked in many and varied ways. It will be difficult to develop any other fruit which will really supplant the apple in the markets of the country.

People tell us that by persistent advertising, wide distribution and forcing the fruit into consumption, ofttimes by very low prices, they have been able to increase the consumption of the banana from 10,000 to 75,000 carloads annually. Their effort is to make the banana the fruit of the workman and the child.

Millions of Trees Planted.

The apple orchardist has these conditions to contend with. He must organize a campaign of education, calling attention to the many and varied uses that can be made of the apple, and must endeavor to inaugurate different systems of distribution. Under previous methods, too many carloads of apples were shipped to the large centers. The smaller towns, able to handle a car or one-half car, were often overlooked and neglected. The retailer usually asks for more profit for his work in distributing apples than the grower can hope to make on the entire year's work.

To illustrate: In my home town I supply the local merchants with apples at $1.50 a box, and they immediately dispose of them at $2.25 a box, a profit of 50 per cent on an article in his hands but a few days. Should these apples go on the stand or be sold by the grocer in small lots, the selling price is likely to be doubled. This phase of distribution will require earnest attention.

In the matter of production, we know that millions of apple trees have been planted in Montana, Washington, Oregon and Idaho. These states have the climate, soil and water suited to large production. What then will happen to the millions of trees planted in the states and sold to non-resident investors?

Incompetent Grower In Fix.

If the non-resident investors finds himself able to give up his present line of work and to give personal attention to his five or ten acres; or if he is able to place the care of his orchard in the hands of some capable friend or some responsible company that can give the same care to his orchard they would give their own, his orchard will then become a producer of commercial apples. If these orchards of non-residents are not intelligently and skillfully handled, and the fruit not graded and honestly packed, then it will not enter the markets.

A year of large production like 1912 surrounds an incompetent or financially weak grower with grave difficulties. Perhaps his capital will not allow him to store his fruit in his own or some other warehouse until the markets ask for it. Perhaps his fruit is shipped before there is a demand, or too many care are shipped to one point, or for some other reasons it does not render him a suitable profit, then the weaker and less successful growers become discouraged and neglect their orchards. They then drop out of the race and are no longer competitors with the up-to-date commercial orchardists.

Ten Per Cent Produce.

Professor Bailey, a very noted and reliable writer on horticultural topics, states that only 10 per cent of the fruit trees sold by nursery men ever become productive and bear fruit for a continuous period. The others fall by the wayside.

The production of apples is less at this time than ten years ago for the reasons above suggested, while the citrus growers and the banana trust have taken up some portion of the apple market, yet the production of apples has fallen off, and during the next five years the market is not likely to be overstocked with apples. There seems yet to be room in the expanding markets of the world for extra fancy and fancy grades of fruit, grown and marketed by the intelligent, up-to-date and successful orchardist. It is believed that the Panama Canal will help to expand the market for apples grown upon the Pacific Coast. The inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific and the oriental races are gradually becoming consumers of apples.

By the use of graders and by packing in the most attractive and up-to-date manner, the orchardist can get his product before the public in such form as to increase the sale and broaden his market. A year like 1912 should decidedly encourage the orchardist who has sufficient capital to construct cold air storage houses either on his own land or at his nearest railroad switch. Thus equipped with storage facilities under his own control, the orchardist will not contribute to the depressing overstock at any point by throwing unsolicited car loads on markets already filled.

New Cherry Pests Are Being Found

"CHERRY trees in this region are infested with two serious insect pests, and my office receives a great many inquiries concerning methods of combatting them," said J. R. Shinn, county agriculturist of Spokane. "The insects are the black cherry aphis and the cherry leaf slug.

"Spraying with a combination of the lime sulphur, and the tobacco spray known as 'Black Leaf 40,' just as the cherry buds are opening has resulted in preventing 90 to 100 per cent of aphis infection. The mixture is made by using one gallon of commercial lime sulphur to 10 gallons of water, and adding one part of the 'Black Leaf 40' to 800 parts of the dilute lime sulphur.

"The cherry slug is the progeny of a small fly which deposits eggs on the lower surface of the leaves. These eggs hatch into slime-covered larvae that do so much damage by eating away the green portion of the leaves, leaving nothing but a network of leaf veins. Two remedies have proven successful in the northwest in combating these slugs. One is the use of a spray containing one pound of white hellebore to 50 gallons of water and the other contains one part of 'Black Leaf 40' to 800 parts of water. These sprays are used as soon as the slugs are discovered on the foliage."

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