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## HOME COURSE IN FRUITS AND BERRIES

THE PEAR AND HOW TO  
GROW IT.

By C. B. BRACKETT, Pomologist,  
Bureau of Plant Industry, United  
States Department of Agriculture.

**P**EAR trees are more difficult to maintain in a healthy, productive condition than apple trees and cannot be grown with the same degree of success over so wide an area of country.

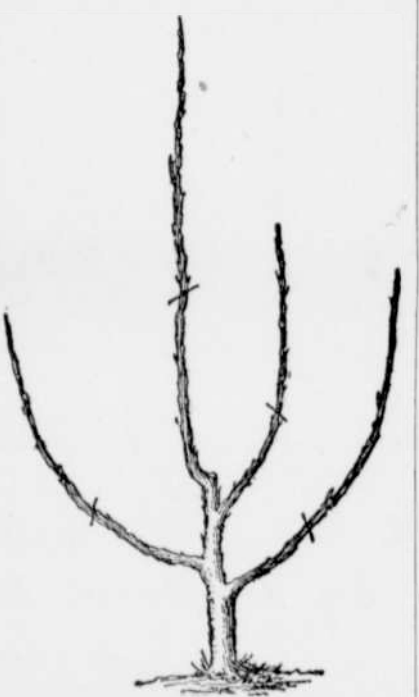
Trees propagated by budding the pear upon quince stock are known as dwarfs. The Angers variety of quince is principally used for this purpose. Such trees develop a fibrous root system, are dwarfed in habit and generally productive and come into bearing early. Some varieties succeed better on quince stock than on pear stock.

The dwarf type of tree may be advantageously used on small city lots, but in some of the eastern states there are many large and profitable commercial pear orchards of small size.

Trees produced by grafting or budding improved varieties on seedling pear stock are known as standards. They are comparatively longer lived than dwarfs and in time become larger trees, capable of yielding heavier crops of fruit, but they usually come into bearing more tardily.

### The "Lipping Process."

A method of converting dwarf trees into half standards, often practiced with good results, is known as the "lipping process." It consists in making a slit with a sharp knife through the bark and slightly into the sapwood of the tree in an upward direction just above the union with the quince root on which it has been worked. At these lips a callus forms from which roots grow, and these in time become strong enough to sustain the tree after



TWO-YEAR-OLD PEAR TREE—THE LINES  
SHOW WHERE TO CUT BACK AT TIME OF  
PRUNING.

the quince roots become inactive. The treatment must be given at the time of setting the trees, and they must be planted deeper than usual, so that the point of union will be several inches underground.

Pears do not certainly reproduce themselves well or true to variety when grown from seed; hence the necessity for budding or grafting in order to obtain the variety desired. But if seedlings are desired good pear seeds germinate readily when sown from healthy, well matured fruit.

The seeds should be stratified—i. e., mixed in alternate layers of moist sand in a box—covered securely to guard against rats and mice, and the box should be placed on the north side of some building where it will be exposed to freezing and thawing throughout the winter until the time for planting. If the seeds are planted in rows three feet apart in good soil and given thorough culture they will make a sufficient growth in one season for budding or grafting. If wanted for root grafting the seedlings should be taken up in the fall and stored in a cellar, where they will keep fresh and be accessible at any time during the winter. If wanted for budding they may be buried in the soil outside until the time of planting in the spring.

Directions for budding, grafting, etc., require extended space, which cannot be given here. They can be obtained from agricultural experiment stations and from experienced pear growers.

### Most Desirable Soil.

The pear succeeds on a variety of soils. For standards a clay loam having a deep, porous subsoil, such as may be found in forest clearings, into which the roots will naturally penetrate, is most desirable. A clay loam may be brought to the desired state of tilth by a good system of mulching and green manuring, and trees planted in it find the available plant food so necessary to maintain a healthful growth. Dwarfs worked on the quince naturally develop a fibrous root system which develops best in rich, moist soil having a subsoil of porous clay. It is essential to the health of the pear that no surplus or stagnant

water be allowed to remain on the surface or in the soil.

The use of fertilizers in pear culture requires most careful consideration and judgment. Lands naturally fertile—viz., loamy soils so common in prairie regions, cleared forest lands and clayey soils having marl in their composition—should not be enriched. Tillable lands that will grow a good crop of corn are sufficiently fertile for the pear tree. When the pear orchard begins to lose its vigor from continuous fruit crops a light dressing of wood ashes or well rotted stable manure may prove beneficial. As long as the trees maintain a normal, healthy growth they require no stimulating food. Trees that are highly stimulated and are making a rapid growth are much more liable to be attacked by blight, which is the greatest drawback to pear culture.

### Use of Commercial Fertilizer.

A commercial fertilizer containing 1½ to 2 per cent of nitrogen, 7 to 9 per cent of available phosphoric acid and 10 to 12 per cent of potash will give good results on land that is deficient in these elements when applied in a quantity ranging from 400 to 600 pounds per acre.

For sections south of about the forty-first parallel of latitude the fall is undoubtedly the best season for planting, but for most of the territory north of this line spring planting is safer.

It is as important with the pear as with any other kind of fruit tree that the land, whether for standards or dwarfs, be well and thoroughly prepared by plowing and stirring the soil and subsoil deeply before planting.

The preparation can best be done in the fall, as the effect of freezing and thawing improves the soil by pulverizing it.

An excellent plan is to plow the ground in lands in the direction that will afford the best drainage, back-furrowing with a heavy plow and leaving the dead furrows where the rows of trees are to be set. It is well to break up the bottom of this dead furrow by running a subsoil plow through it two or three times, giving it a good stirring.

A good distance for planting standard pear trees is 15 by 30 feet—that is, the rows are thirty feet apart and the trees fifteen feet apart in the rows. Another plan is to plant the trees twenty feet apart each way. This distance will afford free circulation of air and abundance of sunlight, both of which are essential to success.

Dwarfs are sometimes planted ten feet apart each way, but fifteen feet each way, or 193 trees to the acre, is better. This distance gives room to drive through the grounds for spraying and to gather the fruit.

### One Year Trees Best.

Strong, well rooted one-year-old trees are preferable to any other age, whether standard or dwarf. If early fruitfulness is desired dwarfs are preferable, but it should be borne in mind that such trees are usually shorter lived and seldom attain large size. For these reasons they are better adapted to small lots or to garden purposes.

On the other hand, if longevity of tree, larger size and capacity for producing heavier crops are desired standards should be planted.

Pears vary in their season of ripening, so that if proper attention is given to the selection of varieties and to careful handling and storing the pear grower may have fruit for his table or market from midsummer until March.

Some varieties of pear are infertile by themselves, and therefore varieties should be intermingled in planting in order to insure fruitfulness. No more than two rows of one variety should be planted together, alternating with some other variety that is considered a good pollinizer. It may be said, however, that self fertile varieties under some conditions may become self sterile under other conditions.

Thorough and frequent stirring of the ground between the rows with a cultivator should be done during the early part of the growing season or from early spring until July 1, when cultivation should cease so that the new growth of wood may harden up sufficiently to endure the winter temperature.

After the trees have attained sufficient size and age to commence fruiting cultivation may be discontinued for awhile and the land seeded to clover. This cover crop will check the rapid growth of the trees and bring them into bearing sooner than if cultivation is continued. If the clover is allowed to fall on the ground instead of cutting and removing it, it will act as a mulch and serve to retain moisture in summer and be a protection in winter.

### Crops Among the Trees.

If desirable to grow other crops between the rows of trees as a matter of economy, this may be done for a few years after being set out without any detriment to the orchard, provided the crop is of such a nature as to require thorough cultivation. To grow among the trees the first season after planting there is no better crop than corn. Other crops, such as potatoes, cabbages, peas, beans, melons, etc., may be grown to advantage. Small grain or grasses which do not require cultivation should not be allowed in the newly planted orchard. All these crops take from the soil plant food which will be needed in time for the orchard's support and which should be returned in some form of manure.

Cover crops, by conserving moisture and adding elements of fertility to the soil, are beneficial to the pear orchard. Among the desirable cover crop plants are the clovers and legumes, such as cowpeas, beans, vetches, etc.

If the practice of sowing cover crops and turning them under is continued from year to year the land will gradually be enriched and the soil maintained in proper physical condition.

### AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT.

Governor West of Oregon is sponsor for an experiment in the employment of convicts in permanent road building in the state that is not only unique, but commendable, both from the standpoint of the welfare of the convicts employed and the building of permanent highways at a minimum cost. The men—there are some thirty of them in the group referred to—are what the governor calls his "honor squad" and have been hired out to the contractor having in charge the building of the state highway to the famous Crater lake, in the southern part of the state. Their camp has been placed in a picturesque spot on the Rogue river, and here the men are today laboring contentedly and healthfully, with no one to look after them but the overseer who is superintending the work. The men are comfortably housed, well fed and receive 25 cents a day besides for the labor. The plan seems to offer a happy solution of the "bad man good roads problem" and is deserving of the careful investigation by those who are interested not only in building permanent highways at a minimum cost, but, what is even more important, redeeming and fitting for citizenship the myriads at present confined in prisons, at once a source of heavy expense and usually a menace to society when released.

### SOME CORNHUSKING.

Each fall as corn picking time rolls around much interest is shown in the husking records made in different parts of the corn belt. Within the past few weeks all previous records have gone a-glimmering. The last week in November a gruelling husking contest was pulled off near Percival, in Fremont, the southwest county of Iowa. The contestants were Bert Van Houten, a resident of the county, and Earl Neely of Nebraska City, Neb. Spice was added to the contest owing to the fact that Van Houten had a short time before defeated Neely in a husking match and the further fact that each had wagered \$500 that he could defeat the other. At the end of ten hours Neely had to his credit 231 bushels and fifty pounds of corn, while Van Houten had husked in the same period 230 bushels and thirty pounds. But if reports are correct these performances were put in the shade by Claude Wilson of Silver City, in Fremont county, who, without a pacemaker, husked 251 bushels and thirty-nine pounds of corn in ten hours, all ears thrown over the wagon being picked up and the corn being as free from husks as average corn. When one takes into account that seventy-five or eighty bushels is considered a very good day's work it can be the better appreciated what the above records mean.

### ANOTHER SERVICE.

Birds, the little friends to which mankind is already heavily in debt for song and destruction of insect pests, are being put to a new and interesting use which it is believed will still further safeguard human life. Experiments which have been conducted by the federal department of mines show that birds, especially the canary, will droop or succumb almost immediately when introduced into a mine in which foul gases have been produced as the result of an explosion, while a healthy man may not feel the effects of the foul air for about eight minutes. The birds are to be used by those engaged in rescue work in mines, the birds being kept in cages and watched closely. If the birds are noticed drooping the rescuers take warning and either retreat their steps or put on their oxygen helmets.

### HOME CURED BACON.

Those who relish home cured bacon will be interested in the following recipe: After the butchering all of the animal heat should be allowed to get out of the meat, and for best results it should not be allowed to freeze. Each piece to be cured should be rubbed with salt and allowed to drain overnight. All should then be packed in a clean barrel or large stone jar, the thicker pieces at the bottom. For each 100 pounds of meat there should be weighed out eight pounds of salt, two pounds of sugar and one ounce of saltpetre. This should be dissolved in four gallons of water and poured over the meat cold. The meat should then be weighted with a stone to keep it under the brine. In from five to seven weeks, depending upon the size of the pieces, the meat may be hung up and smoked.

### COSTLY CARELESSNESS.

In the raising of hogs all too often the value of an excellent ration is largely or entirely offset by improper quarters. Especially is this true as regards the winter care of brood sows. A farmer with whom the writer was talking the other day in speaking of his past season's operations mentioned losing practically all his little pigs last spring, and in discussing this loss it developed that the trouble was not due to feeding the sows an improperly balanced (largely corn) ration, but to the fact that the shelter provided for the sows left them exposed to the dampness and cold, caused them to pile up, and dead little pigs were the result.

### THISTLE EXPERT WANTED.

Directors of the Kansas experiment station are looking for some one to establish a thistle scholarship—that is, an endowment sufficient to pay the expenses of a student who shall devote a good share of his time to a study of the Russian thistle and, if possible, breed the spines of the plant.

*J. E. Trigg*

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