

Correct Setting of Fruit Trees

ONE has but to become a fruit tree agent, says a salesman, in order to realize what a very small percentage of the trees set out every Spring survive, even through the first season. The nurserymen get the big end of the blame for these losses, when it is more often the fault of the party who sets out the trees.

Great care must be exercised in handling trees that are to be planted, or set out. The packing should not be removed from around them till one is ready to set them out or heel them in, as it takes but a very short time for exposure to sun and wind to ruin the roots. If for any reason the trees have been unpacked or the packing seems inefficient, the trees may be carefully removed and held in. This is accomplished by placing the trees on a slightly sloping spot, a shallow trench being dug for the roots. Place the trees in thin layers, covering them well above the roots with moist earth. A thin cloth or layer of straw over the branches for the first day will furnish protection from sudden exposure to the sun after the trees have been confined in the shade so long.

After Packing Is Removed.

As soon as the trees are removed from the packing (or the ground if heeled in), they should be transferred to a vessel of water, to guard against the roots becoming dry during the process of setting out.

A common wash tub makes a very suitable vessel for this purpose, as it can be carried from place to place. Or a barrel can be arranged on a sled and hauled with a team, which affords much more room for trees. A sort of thin mud-paste may be used in place of the water, and this is fine, as it not only dampens the roots well before being placed in the ground but some of the mud will cling to them and be buried with them at the time of setting.

The holes into which trees are to be set, should be of generous dimensions and put down to a good depth, to insure sufficient moisture and ample room for root development. The roots of the trees never should be bent or doubled up, but should lie straight their full length.

Pruning New Trees.

In placing the trees in the holes, the roots should be well pruned, especially all bruised or broken ones being removed. The tops of the trees also should be pruned back before being set, the head and root system being of practically the same proportions. Leave from four to six branches, six to 12 inches long, on apple, plum and pear. Prune peach trees back to the second bud.

The trees should be in the ground an inch or more above the point at which they grew in the nursery. Fill the hole about one-third or one-half full of fine soil; pack it in well around the tree; pour in from one to two gallons of water, depending on the state of the soil. When the water soaks into the soil (and not before) finish filling in around the tree. Press and smooth this last layer, to prevent the escape of moisture, but do not pack it.

It is important that the trees be closely watched during the first season after setting out.

Often some branch will begin to wither and die, and such should be removed as soon as noticed.

The soil usually settles a little around the trunk of the trees, and this space should be filled in, else great damage will be done by the exposure to sun and wind below the proper point.

A mulch of well-rotted straw or hay will prove highly beneficial if placed around the trees shortly after they are set out, as it will prevent the escape of moisture, keep down weeds and act as a fertilizer in promoting rapid, thrifty growth.

Give the Trees Room.

The question of how much space to leave between the trees is one that occasions much argument. This should be regulated largely by circumstances. If the trees are to be kept well pruned back they may be as near as four yards apart, while those which are to be allowed more free growth in the tops should be at least 20 feet apart. The question of distance depends entirely upon the system of training and richness of the soil.

Thorough cultivation is necessary to develop the peach crop as the tree during the time of bearing requires extremely large amounts of moisture and plant food.

Orchard and Garden Notes.

In applying the spray to low-grow-

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ing trees and bushes, make the application when the dew is on the plants.

Take care of the tree fruits. They bring in good money.

If fruit is scarce in your neighborhood this year, there is the tomato. What makes better preserves?

For those insects that suck the juices, such as lice, soapbugs or kerosene emulsion is the thing. Apply with a spray.

Keeping sheep, swine, or poultry in the orchard is hard on the codling moth.

A systematic garden rotation prevents many insect pests and plant diseases from getting a foothold.

Fence the orchard hog tight, and let the hogs eat the windfalls and wormy apples.

Peach borers are best destroyed by digging them out. While it is a slow process, there is really no other way.

Look over the orchard and see if there are any suckers on the trees, and remove them.

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