

Harvest Scenes in Orchards in Medford District



Large Orchard Area

Chiefly because of the large acreage planted to pears in the Rogue River valley, the 1910 census ranked Oregon second among all the states of the Union in the number of young pear trees planted—being excelled only by the state of New York. The same figures give Oregon sixth rank in the quantity of pears produced in 1909; and fourth rank for the value of this production.

The increase in fruit production since 1908, a period of five years, has been almost 1000 per cent. In the year 1914, just closed, the total output of fruit, principally apples and pears, including express shipments, has been about 1150 cars. These figures do not include berries, dried, canned or processed fruits. Compared with California, Jackson county shipped in 1913 more than one-sixth as many cars of pears and almost one-sixth as much deciduous tree fruits. The net returns for the 1913 fruit crop reached well above the \$1,000,000 mark. Jackson county alone of all the fruit districts of the Pacific coast exceeded in output the spring estimate made on the fruit crop, showing that climatic conditions are such that estimates may be depended upon. To show what the Jackson county fruit output for 1913 would look like if assembled, it has been estimated that it would require a solid train of refrigerator cars ten miles long to move the crop.

Specialization in Pears

Among the many varieties of fruits that have been and can be successfully grown in the Rogue River valley, there is a decided tendency toward a specialization in pears. New orchardists are advised by the resident fruit-growing expert to plant at least 80 per cent pears—the remainder apples. Certain sections of the valley, notably in the vicinity of Ashland, have specialized more or less in peaches—but the greater number of peach trees are merely considered as quickly maturing "fillers," planted between the rows of apple and pear trees, the peach trees to help in providing running expenses and to be removed when they begin to crowd the permanent trees of the orchard.



The production of pears, like the production of fruit in general in the Rogue River valley, has had a gradual evolution. In the original family orchards and the first commercial orchards of the valley are from thirty to fifty different varieties of pear trees. These different trees have been observed, the unfits sifted out, and today popular approval seems to center on the following seven different varieties—Bartlett, Howell, Anjou, Comice, Bose, Winter Nells and P. Barry, which are here arranged in the order in which they ripen.

This specialization in pears, and

this sifting down to best varieties was brought about by many different factors. Pear trees, where the variety and the soil and the climate are specially adapted, are very easily cared for, comparatively. Vigorous pear trees require much less attention and return a relatively much larger and more consistent yield than do apple trees. It was early proved that the Rogue River valley was splendidly adapted to the production of an exceptional quality of pears—proved by many market records and competitive awards.

Large yields and record prices

from a few orchards do not necessarily establish the future of any extensive orchard district or prove average yields and average profits—but they do afford an interesting index as to competitive possibilities, other factors being equal. With these reservations, records may be mentioned—the fact that fancy Comice pears received in the London markets what is credited to be the highest price ever paid for green fruit; the fact that one Bartlett pear orchard of seven and one-half acres in the Rogue River valley has yielded approximately 6000 boxes of pears every year for several years past—and Bartlett pears have averaged approximately \$1.35 per box f. o. b. for the past six years. Bartlett pears have been the heaviest yielders, but other varieties have good high records to their favor—Winter Nells yielding as high as 435 boxes to the acre, for example.

Apple Records and Varieties

The chief varieties of apples grown in the Rogue River valley are Newtown and Spitzenberg. Between the two varieties the Newtown seems the decided favorite, since it is more adaptable to the various soils of the valley, and since the quantity and quality of yield is more regular and certain; this notwithstanding the fact that several much coveted prizes have been captured by Rogue River valley Spitzenberg—including the sweepstakes prize at the National apple show in Spokane in 1909, in competition with other apple-growing districts of the Pacific northwest. On the other hand, a carload of Newtown apples were awarded first prize in their class at the Canadian international apple show at Vancouver, B. C., in 1910. The apple acreage in the Rogue River valley is about one-fourth that of pears, and large apple yields have been reported.

Spitzenbergs having high records of 520 boxes to the acre, and Newtowns 592 boxes to the acre. The planting of apples, as in the planting of pears, demands a careful selection of soil in order to secure maximum results. Especially is this true for the Spitzenberg.

Organization for Orchard Protection

One of the chief factors in the exceptional success of the Rogue River valley as a fruit section in the organized protection of the valley from orchard pests. And the presence of this organization, and its unanimous public support, is the strongest possible assurance that the district will always maintain its world reputation for quality production. It is axiomatic among horticulturists that any section especially adapted to the production of fruit is for the same reasons especially favorable to fruit pests. Hence every orchard section must sooner or later meet the fruit

pest fight. The Rogue River valley has already met this fight—and has won. And the winning of this fight is one of the decided strengths of the Rogue River valley orchard district—for there has resulted a fruit protective organization which is unique. As has been said, one of the strengths of the Rogue River valley as an orchard district is its separation from other orchard districts. The valley is almost entirely surrounded and protected by mountains, exceptionally favorably located as to climatic advantages for fruit production. Public sentiment in Jackson county realizes the necessity of hiring and paying for the best of practical and scientific care for the preservation of the orchards and for the maintenance of the high quality of the fruit product as a whole.

Why High Prices Received

The acreage devoted to pears, in the west as a whole and in the United States as a whole, has decidedly decreased during the past few years, because of blight. So critical has the situation become, in general, that practically all state agricultural experiment stations have advised that no additional pear trees be planted until blight control has been secured. Many pear districts have been practically wiped out; others badly diseased, and belated flights are being waged. This is one of the reasons why the Rogue River valley—where the orchardists have gained control over the pear blight situation—received for the 1913 crop of pears the highest prices received for several past years. And this is one of the reasons why it is confidently expected that the pear acreage of the valley may be increased several times without risk in overstocking the coast, the national and the world market for high quality fruit, year after year.

Orchard Protection by County

A county organization is maintained for the protection of the orchard districts. The horticultural laws for the state of Oregon are stringent and community sentiment in Jackson county permits and demands their strict enforcement. An absolute quarantine is maintained against seed, trees or fruit from certain districts where orchard pests are especially prevalent. And all orchard supplies imported into the valley are rigidly inspected. Also, all fruit to be shipped from the county or offered for sale in the county is subject to inspection, and the law provides a heavy penalty for violations.

Pear Blight Controlled

A central office is maintained in Medford, in the heart of the main valley, which office is a general clearing house for orchard ideas and general free information for both the new and the established orchardists. Several deputies devote their time to inspecting the fruit trees and fruit products of the valley, and disease tendencies are closely watched and summarily attended to. This work of disease prevention and the upholding of the quality of the product is further aided by a large group of volunteer "secret service" inspectors scattered throughout the valley.



Snowy Butte Orchard, Typical Orchard Home in Central Point District, Famous in World Fruit Markets for Winter Nells Pears