

FRUIT CULTURE.

What Fruits are Best Adapted to our Climate and What are the Best Methods of Production and Improvement.

By Hon. W. D. Johnson, of Marion, before the State Agricultural and Mechanical Society.

After God created man and gave him dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and everything that moveth upon the earth, he gave him, as his first gift, every herb-bearing seed, and every tree in the which was the fruit of the tree yielding seed, which includes fruit in its various forms, giving comfort, health and vigor to our constitutions, it being a well established fact that that part of the population in any country which habitually uses fruits of the best quality are the most vigorous and live the longest, and are the most active in whatever pursuits they are engaged in.

The love of fruits may be said to be universal, and no home without a liberal supply of them is such a home as every owner of even a few acres of land should have for the enjoyment of himself, his family, and his friends. The fruit which he does not love to eat, he should not grow, and he should not be surprised that his children do not love their home as they should, and that they find more pleasure at other places, or to find them committing petty thefts in the fruit gardens of their neighbors.

The cultivation of fruits, especially the finer kinds, is a most interesting and profitable branch of agriculture, and is highly improving to the intellects of those engaged in it, in determining the aspect and soil in which each fruit succeeds best; in the various ways of abstracting from the soil all excessive moisture; in the various processes by which the soil is enriched; in the different methods and times of planting seeds and putting out trees and vines, reference always being had to the ease and success of the subsequent cultivation; in the improvement of old varieties by skillful culture or in the production of new ones by the system of amelioration as practiced by Van Mons of Belgium, or that of cross-breeding or hybridizing as practiced by Knight of England, and Dr. Wiley of Chester, S. C.; in selecting the best kinds of fruit of different sorts ripening at the same time for each period of the entire fruit season; in selecting the soil and climate in which they are to be grown; in the study of the peculiarities and habits of all the fruits which are regarded as worthy of general cultivation or peculiarly suited to any particular location; in the use of the knife in giving the best form, and the most vigor to the trees, and in the study of the best methods of pruning and training the trees, and in the study of the best methods of propagating the trees, and in the study of the best methods of protecting them from the ravages of insects and other enemies.

The first thing to be done by the fruit-grower is to select a suitable piece of land. For the cultivation of most fruits a deep clay loam is best, but porous soil in which the roots can run deeply without coming in contact with water. They are more sensitive to atmospheric changes than any of the fruits ordinarily grown by us, and hence the importance of their roots growing deeply. In growing fruits in this climate, especially in the winter, the most important aspect is drainage. Trees are injured not so much by the extreme cold as by the rapid thawing and expansion of the sap and thereby rupturing the wood vessels, and the blooming is delayed by a northern aspect and thereby sometimes a crop of fruit is lost.

A successful fruit-growing the plot of land ought to be naturally well drained, and if not, the first thing to be done is to make it so by covered drains. It has been said that the pear tree cannot bear to have its feet in water, and it might be added that the same is true of the peach tree, vines or plants can be readily and vigorously in land that is not properly drained, and by thorough drainage the growing and fruit maturing season is lengthened, thereby supplying the early fruit earlier and ripening late fruits which would otherwise be unripe, and the fruiting season is thereby lengthened. The top of the trees should be carefully thinned out so that the light and the air may pass freely through them, and in order that the roots may be kept vigorous and growing there should be no crossing or over-lapping of limbs. All kinds of fruits should be so planted that they are cultivated with the plough, as it is now cheaply and generally more thoroughly done than in any other way. Of all the small fruits the strawberry is the only one we would recommend for general cultivation. Dowing pronounced it "the most delicious and the most wholesome of all berries," and the most universally cultivated in Northern Ohio.

The plants are early and cheaply produced. They can be relied upon for a crop of fruit every year, and the smallest landholder on a small plot of ground may raise an abundant supply of fruit

for himself and family, and at a time when there are no other fresh green fruits.

The plants should be set out annually, as is done by the truck farmers around Charleston, or the plants should be put out twelve inches apart in rows three or three and one half feet wide, and the runners should be encouraged to occupy the centre spaces between the rows until the crop is matured and gathered, and then the plants standing in the centre between the old rows should be barred with a plough on both sides, leaving the plants standing in the middle of the old rows to be cultivated for the next crop, and setting out each year in that way avoided, and at the same time the plants each year are young and vigorous, and on land well broken up during the year, thereby securing large crops of the best quality.

The fine plums are so subject to the attacks of the curculio that ordinarily they will not pay for the trouble of cultivation, except where grown on hard or paved yards, to which poultry and pigs have free access, but different kinds of the Chickasaw plums should be produced in every orchard.

Different kinds of figs should be grown in the orchard or garden; the flavor of the fruit is exceedingly sweet and luscious, so much so that it is not often relished at first, but a love for it both in its green and dried state is soon acquired, and one advantage is that it bears several crops during the year, and if the first should be cut off by the spring frosts an early second crop which is almost always the best crop.

The apple is not only the most extensively grown and most highly appreciated fruit in this country, but also in all temperate climates, and its praises have been celebrated first in fable, next in song, and next in the numerous uses to which it is applied.

The varieties now cultivated are entirely different and far superior to those which were grown by our ancestors a hundred years ago, and no doubt may yet be greatly improved, though no variety has of late years been produced which equals the variety in the existing varieties.

Many of the finest apples can only be successfully grown in small sections or belts of country, completely failing in all others, whilst others seem to be equally well adapted to various countries, as the red Astracian, a native of Russia, one of our best summer apples.

It is essential to the health and long life of apple trees. Where it is wanted it should be liberally supplied, as it greatly improves the character of the fruit. Little trimming is required beyond properly balancing the head of the tree, the cutting out of dead wood and the cutting out of limbs where they are injured.

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In this climate are liable are the borers, and their presence may be easily detected by thick gum exuding from the color of the tree, at or near the surface of the ground, and they should always be promptly removed by the knife. There is no region of the world where the peach can be more easily and successfully grown than in South Carolina. Compare the growth of the tree, the longevity of it and the superior size and flavor of fruit to that grown in the best portions of the Middle States, and all the advantages are in favor of those grown in this State.

No fruit is grown so extensively as the grape, which is native of all temperate and tropical climates, and has been highly appreciated ever since Noah planted a vineyard. Wine was one of the promised blessings of Canaan, both for its fruit and the wine made therefrom. One great mistake has been in attempting to grow the European varieties of grape-vines in this country, instead of improving our native varieties both by planting seed and hybridizing; from which such sorts as the Delaware, the Concord, the Hartford Prolific and the Palmetto Chester have been produced, and should be in every garden. But the most valuable grape for us to grow is the Scuppernon, and its varieties, such as the Thompson and the Flowers, which in any deep, porous soil, even in our poorest sand hills, produce enormous crops of good fruit. One vine of the Flowers grape, not more than from 20 to 30 years old, in Bladen County, N. C., produced one year over 300 gallons of wine.

We believe that Nature has not been more lavish of her gifts to any other portion of the world than she has been to the Southern States. All the cereals and all the fruits grown in the Middle and Northern States are grown easily and successfully in the South, except the cherry, and some of the small fruits, and even these do well in our mountains, and many of the most valuable tropical fruits are successfully grown in our season.

But we do not properly appreciate and improve our advantages. Fruits produced and shipped North are sold for large profits, long before the great mass of our farmers are able to get them for their own consumption, and those which they do have are ordinarily of the most inferior kind, produced from seedlings scattered about in the cotton or corn fields, or to the fence-jams. The very ease, cheapness and abundance with which the best fruits grow in the South is a great advantage, and one which we do not properly appreciate.

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A MODERN MIRACLE.

A Young Lady Cured by Faith After Being an Invalid for Nearly Two Years.

Buffalo Commercial Advertiser.

One of the most marvelous cases of restoration to health ever made public is that of Miss Carrie F. Judd, daughter of Mr. O. K. Judd, for the past twenty-seven years in the American Express office, and who resides at No. 260 Connecticut street. From an account of the case written by the young lady to a friend we take the following extracts: "On January 6, 1877, after a gradual decline of health, I was prostrated with an attack of nervous fever, proceeding from my spine, the result probably of a severe fall on a stone sidewalk several months before. My disease grew into paralysis, and I was unable to move, if by any human effort I could have been placed upon my feet I should have immediately been all out of shape. They, however, became strong and firm at once. I have continued to improve in strength and flesh. I can walk several blocks without resting, and for more than two years have been able to attend to my school. I have not taken a drop of medicine since February 25. My friends said that I look much better than I did before I was prostrated."

A POMPEIAN BIRD STORY.

Relics of the Canaries of Eighteen Hundred Years Ago.

No sooner was the excavations of this chamber commenced than, as I have already told you, a number of bronze and iron articles were discovered. There were, for example, iron keys, kitchen utensils, and other articles of household use were found almost in a heap together near the door, and among them a considerable number of small earthenware pots, which I somewhat incredulously had described as drinking cups, birds, and the like. It was taken away in a box, and had been the shop of a seed merchant and seller of singing birds, and very little imagination was required to see the place as it was the day before the fatal eruption of 79. At first the room seemed to have been a receptacle for a miscellaneous collection of bronze and iron articles, and there was no special character about it. The walls bore no traces of painting, but the clearing was continued, to the left of the door on entering a heap of millet-seed was found, so carbonized that on taking up a handful it flowed between one's fingers, for every grain was separate and distinct. It was taken away in a box, and had been the shop of a seed merchant and seller of singing birds, and very little imagination was required to see the place as it was the day before the fatal eruption of 79. At first the room seemed to have been a receptacle for a miscellaneous collection of bronze and iron articles, and there was no special character about it. The walls bore no traces of painting, but the clearing was continued, to the left of the door on entering a heap of millet-seed was found, so carbonized that on taking up a handful it flowed between one's fingers, for every grain was separate and distinct. 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