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PRUNING AND SPRAYING THE HOME ORCHARD

Pruning and Spraying Absolutely Necessary to Get Good Fruit—Why, When and How to Do the Work

THERE is no royal road to successful fruit growing, and it is just as essential for the home orchardist to prune and spray his trees as it is for the successful livestock man to dip his cattle.



MR. HAYDEN

Pruning is absolutely essential in order to keep the trees within bounds and to maintain the bearing habit each year. There is scarcely a section of country where spraying is not of prime importance. Trees should be pruned before sprayed. In doing so, much spray material may be saved, and the trees can be more efficiently covered with the spray solutions.

All fruit trees, possibly with the exception of the pear, should be pruned annually, and all refuse material burned or removed from the orchard. Small fruits, such as the blackberries, dewberries, raspberries and grapes, should be gone over and all old wood cut out and the new growth cut back.

During the dormant season is the proper time to prune. At this time the trees and vines are resting and they will withstand the treatment at this time. Grape vines should be pruned at once, this being especially true in regard to the Muscadine grapes. When pruned late in the winter, the vitality of the vines is lowered considerably by bleeding.

Fruiting Habits of the Common Fruits

THE successful pruner should know something about the fruiting habits of the trees to be pruned. This is necessary in order to know just what wood to remove and how much. There is a similarity in the fruit-bearing habits of the fruits. For example, all of the stone fruits, such as the peach, plum and cherry, exhibit similar habits.

The fruit buds on a peach tree are always found on one-year-old wood. Consequently, in order to produce annual crops, a wood growth must be made each year. After peach trees are in bearing, all that is necessary is to remove from one-fourth to three-fourths of the present season's growth and cut all branches that interfere with each other.

The apple and pear produce fruit only on wood that is two years old or older. The fruit buds are compound, that is, leaf and flower buds are one, and they are found on short spurs. Therefore don't make the mistake of removing the crooked, distorted little branches that are found on all bearing trees. The growth should be so thinned out and cut back that there will be an equal distribution of light and air to every part of the tree. Apple and pear trees that have been neglected often become alternate bearers, producing fruit every other year, and this is brought on usually by neglect to properly prune the orchard.

To keep grape vines vigorous and thrifty, prune them severely each winter as early as possible. Just after the leaves fall is an admirable time. The fruiting habit differs materially from the orchard trees, in that for every bud that is left on the vine, there is a possibility of that bud producing from four to two bunches of grapes.

When and How to Spray

IT IS economy to prune the trees and remove all refuse from the orchard before attempting to spray. Every tree and vine from the orchard should be sprayed during the dormant season. Before beginning work determine just what you are spraying for, what is necessary to control the pest, and just how to apply the remedy in order to be successful.

The San Jose scale is a universal

pest and is to be found in practically all orchards. It is a sucking insect and can only be controlled by spraying with a caustic spray. At the present time, the most reliable remedy we have is commercial lime-sulphur. When applied with a specific gravity of 1.03, this pest can be usually controlled. The commercial product may be purchased and will be effective if diluted about one to eight to ten,—that is, one gallon of the solution to eight to ten gallons of water. All peach, plum, pear, and apple trees may be sprayed with this solution. If the trees are badly infested, two sprayings will be desirable, one in early winter and the second just before growth commences in the spring.

This solution may be made at home by cooking the lime and sulphur from 45 minutes to an hour. The formula should be: 16 pounds of lime, 16 pounds of sulphur, 50 gallons of water.

When prepared this way, no dilutions are necessary, and the spray should be applied while hot. Boil until all the sulphur is in solution and strain directly into spray pump.

For the home orchard a barrel pump will be necessary. It is important that all pumps be equipped with good connections, an adequate air chamber, two leads of durable hose, and nozzles capable of throwing a fine misty spray. If possible, choose bright, sunshiny days for this work, when the air is calm. Be sure to cover the entire tree with a coating of the spray, and remember that it is not necessary to drench the trees with the solution.

C. J. HAYDEN.

Orchard and Garden Work This Week and Next

FOR earliest tomatoes, sow the seed in a hotbed now. Sparks' Earliana is a good variety.

The lawn will be greatly benefited by a top-dressing of finely decomposed stable manure.

Get ready to apply the second winter spray. It must be applied before the buds open in spring.

If you failed to plant sweet peas in November, which is the best time to plant them in the South, plant some now.

Every Southern farmer should have an orchard containing all the fruits that will grow in his locality with varieties of each ripening in succession.

Leek is a vegetable that should be more common in home gardens at this season. It is a good substitute for green onions during winter.

A sprinkle of evergreens about the home grounds furnishes a touch of green during winter that is always appreciated. Now is a good time to transplant them.

In making out your order for vegetable seeds do not fail to include flower seeds as well. An abundance of flowers add much to the attractiveness of the farm home.

It is almost time to plant spring Irish potatoes. See that you get enough seed to plant a patch that will produce potatoes to last you until the fall crop is ready for use.

Strawberries that were not mulched in the fall should be mulched now. To serve its best purpose in keeping berries clean the mulch must be applied before blossoms appear.

If your fruit trees are affected by the bark cracking, due to sun scald, shade the bodies of the trees during late winter and early spring with cornstalks or other rough material.

The present high prices of food of all kinds should be an inducement for us to have a better garden this year than we have ever had. A good garden is to any family a great financial saving.

If you think that it will not pay you to buy a spraying outfit for your individual use, ask a few of your neighbors to join you on the purchase of one. The cost to each will be small, whereas the benefit will be great.

F. J. CRIDER,
Associate Horticulturist.



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