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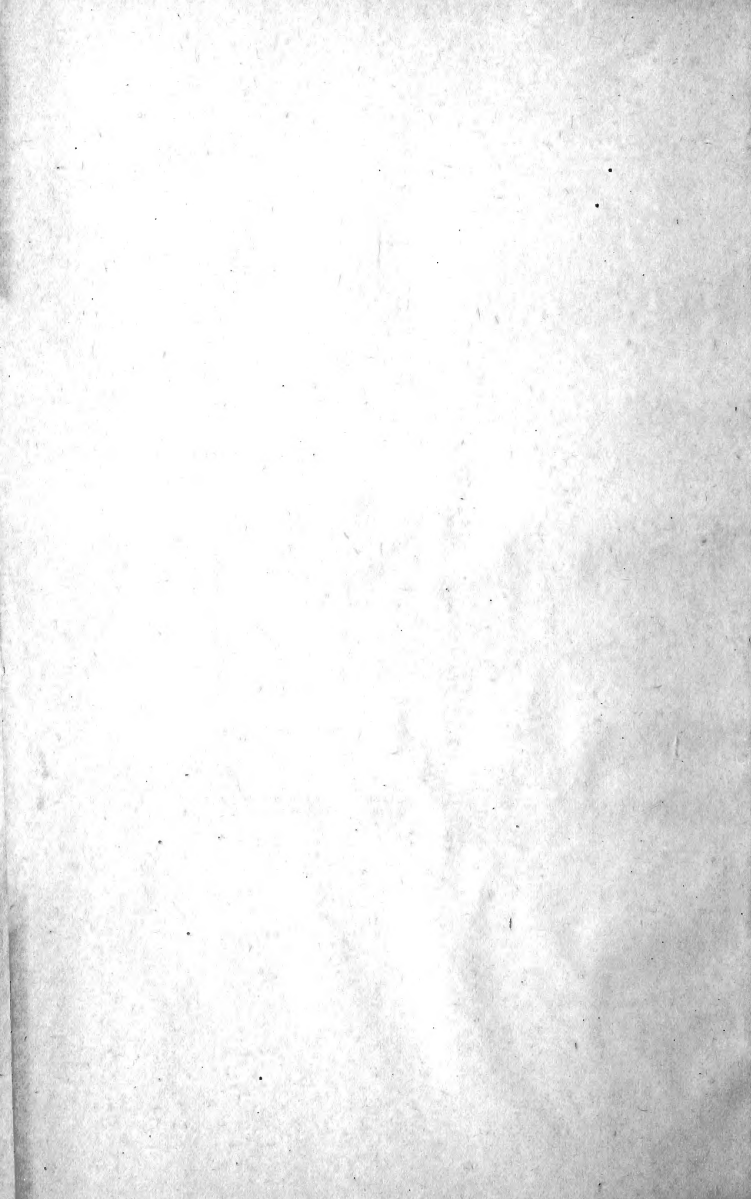
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Fruit & Culture

—FOR THE—



GULF STATES




SOUTH OF LATITUDE 32 DEGREES.




BY T. JAY LACY,

MOUNT HOPE NURSERY,

WASHINGTON, LA.



PRICE, 25 CENTS.



1888:

PRESS OF TOWN TALK,

ALEXANDRIA, LA.

FRUIT CULTURE

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PREFACE.

After thirty years experience with fruits and fruit trees in Louisiana, we give some practical information in fruit growing for the Gulf States, south of latitude 32 degrees.

This book is written in plain language, and everything made as short and comprehensive as possible.

The fruits spoken of, are such as we know to suit the climate; such as do not, are left out.

We make this work a practical guide for those who wish to grow fruit largely, as well as for those who wish to plant a few trees in their gardens.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

The fruit belt of the United States embraces about 5 degrees of latitude, from 35 to 40 degrees. In this range more kinds of fruits will succeed well than in any other; though this belt in favored localities extends both North and South of this range.

Apples and pears will grow further North than most other fruits, while peaches and plums will grow further South.

When any fruit is grown out of its proper latitude, there will be a decrease in the production: either diminished in size, shy bearing, or numerous failures. The peach, for instance, when taken far South, out of its home, will often produce a few beautiful fruits, but the tree will seldom last very long.

And so it is with any fruit, when taken from its proper home, it will be a whole or partial failure.

WHERE TO BUY FRUIT TREES.

A word about nurserymen, may not be amiss here. Nurserymen as a class are probably as honest as any other business men, though we would

not like to vouch for them all; yet every nurseryman makes the best fruit trees he can for his own locality, for it is his interest to make trees to suit his climate in order to get the trade.

The Northern nurseryman does not know the kind of trees for the South, nor the Southern nurseryman for the North, and if any Southern nurseryman should try to make trees for the North, he would find no one there so foolish as to buy them. Therefore, we say, buy fruit trees near home, where it is the interest of the nurseryman to keep up a reputation.

In the past twenty years, hundreds of dollars worth of fruit trees have been purchased in every neighborhood in Louisiana, from foreign nurseries, and yet very few persons have fruit enough to pay for the trees, to say nothing about all the cost and trouble of cultivating. The simple reason is, the trees were not the varieties to suit the climate.

CHAPTER II.

PEARS.

The pear we shall class as King of Fruits for the South, yet we have only two varieties adapted to this climate, the LeConte and Kieffer. These pears are of Chinese origin, and a sport from the Chinese Sand pear, which has been grown in China for time unknown.

Of the Sand pear, there are many varieties, some are very large, and all are vigorous growing trees, and bear well, but the fruit is of poor quality and only fit for cooking.

The LeConte and Kieffer pears are both seedlings of the Chinese Sand pear, with the health and vigor of the parent tree, but with fruit of much better quality.

As near as we can ascertain, Mr. Prince, of Long Island, N. Y., was the first to introduce the Sand pear from China; and, by the way, he was the leading nurseryman of this country more than fifty years ago, when the nursery business was in its infancy in the United States.

It was then supposed that the Sand pear always produced the same fruit from seed, as many of the Chinese fruits do now; and in this way he then produced them, grafting not being as common then as now.

CHAPTER III.

THE LE CONTE PEAR.

About 1856 Major John LeConte, of Philadelphia, bought some trees at the Prince Nursery, and among them was what Mr. Prince supposed to be a Chinese Sand pear. The trees were sent to Mrs. Harding, of Liberty county, Georgia, where this particular tree commenced bearing about twenty-five years ago, and is still healthy, vigorous and fruitful. As the LeConte was first called Sand pear, *the name* prevented its coming rapidly into notice, as every well informed nurseryman knew that the Sand pear was of very poor quality. But when the LeConte was found to be good, and not subject to blight, nurserymen took hold of it with a rush, grafted it on all kinds of stock, and consequently made splendid failures; for the LeConte pear tree is worthless when made on any other roots except its own.

Even now, after so many years experience, many Northern nurserymen claim that grafted LeContes are quite as good as any other; and many grafted LeContes are still being sold all over the country, which are not worth planting; while the LeConte on its own roots, is a perfect treasure for this country, and will bear as bountifully here in the South as apples do in the North.

The LeConte is the most rapid growing pear tree known, fifteen feet in one season not being uncommon, yet it will not grow well when young, unless it has good, clean cultivation.

We have often seen trees five years old that had not grown as much as they ought to have grown in two years.

HOW TO PLANT LE CONTE PEAR TREES.

When one year old, LeConte pear trees are planted; they should be cut back to within two feet from the ground, and allowed to branch at the ground, and never, under any circumstances, should a branch be cut or pinched off during the Summer.

If the trees are two or three years old, they may be cut off a little higher, but in all cases they should be branched at the ground to make good trees.

Distance to plant LeConte pear trees, is twenty-five to thirty feet.

A good way to grow a few pear trees, is to plant them in the garden, and continue to make a garden all the same. As they run their roots down, they do not take much from the soil, and as their tops grow up, they make little shade, hence they will not injure the garden much. for about five years; then they will be of bearing size, and will pay well for the room they occupy.

THE CULTIVATION.

There is nothing more important than good cultivation for LeConte pear trees, and they should be cultivated the entire Summer and Fall, in order to get the best growth possible, and make strong, healthy trees. Many of the LeContes planted in this country are not worth half what they ought to be, for want of proper cultivation when young. The cultivation required for cotton is the best that can be given to young LeConte pear trees; but we shall have occasion to speak of this more fully under the head of Cultivation of Fruit Trees.

PRUNING LE CONTE PEAR TREES.

When LeConte pear trees are one year planted the largest upright branches should be cut back one-half, and so much of the shorter branches as is required to cut the top of the tree square off. Leave all the lower branches and let them spread out as far as possible.

The second year they should be pruned the same as the first, being sure to leave all the side branches. After this, they will not usually need any more pruning, but the cultivation should go on the same, for at least five years, when they ought to be bearing. After that, if the trees are well mulched, with a horse cart load around each tree, they will not require any more cultivation.

LeContes naturally grow tall, and when they are

planted very closely, or if there are other large trees or buildings near them, they will grow much higher to get the light and air, hence if you wish your trees to grow low, give them room to spread, encourage the side branches, and never prune them up from the bottom.

LE CONTE PEAR TREES FROM CUTTINGS.

It is said that LeConte pear trees will grow from cuttings, which is true, but LeContes will grow from cuttings no better than some other pears, and it will not pay any one outside of the nursery business to try to grow LeConte pear trees from cuttings, for they will not, generally, get more than from two to five per cent. to grow, and oftener none at all.

Nurserymen often get only a small per cent. to grow, with all the care they can give, for if the cuttings get a little too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry, they are gone and nothing can save them.

The secret of growing cuttings of any kind, is to keep an even temperature and moisture, and this requires more preparation and attention than most folks are able to give.

Some persons think it only necessary to put a twig in the ground and they will have a LeConte pear tree the next year, but they make a mistake when they try it. The truth is the trees are hard to make, and even nurserymen often make splendid failures.

THE AGE AT WHICH THE LE CONTES BEAR FRUIT.

With good care they will bear some fruit when four years planted, and ought to bear at least one bushel to the tree five years after planting, and from four to seven bushels in six or eight years.

We grew this year six bushels of fine fruit on a very large five year old tree, which sold readily for eighteen dollars.

We had other trees equally good, but we did not keep a separate account of the fruit.

THE TIME OF RIPENING.

LeConte pears never ripen on the trees; they must be picked and ripened in the house; a cool, dark place is best.

We usually commence picking and shipping about July 15th; when they will require about ten days to ripen.

In picking LeConte pears, care should be taken to pick the largest, as the smaller ones if left on the tree, will continue to grow for several weeks. They can be shipped any distance desired, in baskets, boxes or barrels. They will reach their destination in good condition, and ripen while in transit.

LeContes will always sell well in Northern markets, as the season in which they ripen is before most other pears; besides LeContes are large, and large fruits always sell well.

The flavor of the LeConte when well ripened is equal to the Bartlett.

The main crop should be picked for market in July, but where you have a plentiful supply, some may be left on the trees, which will continue till September.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KIEFFER PEAR

The Kieffer is the largest good pear known, often weighing as high as a pound and a half. It is as prolific as it is large, bearing well the third season after planting. The Kieffer more nearly resembles the Chinese Sand pear, than the LeConte does. though they are both seedlings of the Chinese Sand pear, and great improvements on the original stock.

The Kieffer was grown from seed of the Chinese Sand pear, by Peter Kieffer, near Philadelphia, and bore its first fruit in 1871, when the tree was only two years old.

Like the LeConte, it thrives in the Gulf States, and makes a good, healthy growth, from early Spring till late in the Fall.

It does not grow as fast as the LeConte, and in order to make good trees, should be grafted on LeConte stocks, which make much better trees, as

they have the vigor of the LeConte combined with the early fruitfulness of the Keiffer, besides the LeConte never grows any suckers, which are often very annoying with other pears.

The young trees should be cut off to two feet when planted, branched low to the ground and never pruned.

They may be planted twenty to twenty-five feet apart, and should have good, clean cultivation, the same as cotton, the entire Summer and Fall.

The Kieffer is a good tree to plant in a small garden, as it bears a great deal of fruit, and takes up but little room. It is not as tall or large a tree as a LeConte.

The Kieffer pear when grafted on LeConte stocks, will grow on any kind of soil that will grow good corn or cotton, but rich clay is best to produce large fruit.

TIME OF RIPENING.

The Kieffer pear ripens from the middle to the last of September, but if left on the tree will continue to grow till late in October.

The Kieffer when well ripened is a rich, high flavored pear, but like the LeConte it never ripens on the tree. It must be carefully gathered and ripened in a cool, dark place.

The trees generally bear too much, and require to be thinned out, to keep them from breaking

down, as well as to make the fruit left on large and fine.

Thin the fruit early in July, and again about the middle of August. Each time putting the fruit away until it begins to turn yellow, when it will make preserves of fine flavor, equal to the best Orange Quince. In fact it is not necessary to plant quinces in this climate (where they are shy bearers) when we have the Kieffer pear which will bear sooner, better fruit, and four times as much of it. The fact is, the Kieffer will be the great canning and preserving pear for the South, as it ripens late and can be worked up in cool weather.

CHAPTER V.

PLUM TREES.

Plums are a good fruit to cultivate in the Gulf States and will generally produce good crops. But if they fail sometimes it is no more than other things do, for failure is easier than success in growing plums as well as anything else. They are not much injured by water, as most other fruits, consequently they may be grown where other fruits will not succeed at all.

The soil best adapted to plums is stiff clay, though any soil that will pack down hard will pro-

duce good plums. The same cultivation that you would give to cotton is good while the trees are young; but when they are bearing size there is nothing so good as chopping the weeds and grass off clean with a hoe several times a year. This may seem like a big job, but it is surprising how much ground a man will chop over in a day provided the work has not been neglected too long.

Plant the same depth the trees stood in the nursery, and plant several varieties in the same row, having no two of the same variety next each other. In this way the varieties will fertilize each other, and some good varieties which are rather shy bearers will bear bountifully. This will make no difference with the quality of the fruit, though the seed will not be likely to produce the same as the tree from which it is taken.

The curculio often injures plums, especially if the spring is late; if the spring opens early they are not apt to be troublesome, as the fruit is set before they come.

A good preventive of these insects is to rub the trunk and large limbs of the trees with a cake of common bar soap just before the buds start. Also throw around under each tree one gallon of common salt; this, we think, will help to keep the insects away.

Stable manure is best for plum trees if your land is poor.

Chickasaw plums, of which there are many varieties, are best adapted to this climate.

The following varieties are good for market or home use :

CADDO CHIEF.

The earliest good plum, bright red, fair size, good quality and ripens in May.

ECHO.

The largest early plum known, oblong, bright pink, grows well and bears well. Ripens with the Caddo Chief.

WILD GOOSE.

A seedling of the Chickasaw, which it resembles very much, though a little larger and later.

CUBA.

A large yellow plum of dwarf habits. From Cuba. Ripens early.

PARSONS.

One of the best late plums and makes a beautiful tree. The leaf is as large as an apple, and the wood is as smooth as a French prune. The fruit is dark red, flavor fine. Ripens in August.

GOLDEN BEAUTY.

This is a marvel of beauty and astonishes all who see it. Large, rich, golden yellow. Very firm and nearly a freestone. Ripens in September.

CHAPTER VI.

JAPANESE FRUITS.

Strange as it may appear, though comparatively few of the Northern fruits succeed really well in the Gulf States, yet we have never found a failure among the Japanese and Chinese fruits.

Japanese ornamental plants, and shrubs succeed equally as well as the fruits, and to know that any tree, plant, or shrub, comes from Japan, is evidence that it will succeed well in the Gulf States.

LOQUAT—(IMPROPERLY CALLED JAPAN PLUM.)

The Loquat is a beautiful, large leaved, ever-green tree, which has been grown here for a long time under the name of Japan plum. But it is not a plum, it belongs to the *Mespilus* family, with the specific Japanese name of Loquat.

Of late years several varieties of plums have been introduced from Japan. We give each tree its proper name as far as possible. We wish it understood, when we speak of Japan plums, we mean real plums, not Loquats.

The Loquat is a handsome, ornamental tree, and as it does not grow in pyramidal form it makes a fine small shade tree. It grows well in the Gulf States, and will stand considerable cold, but does not bear well far from the Gulf Coast, as it re-

verses the order of things, blooming in the Fall, and ripening its fruit in the early Spring. Even if it does not mature its fruit, it is well worth planting for its handsome foliage and fragrant flowers.

JAPAN PLUMS.—(PRUNUS JAPONICA.)

For a few years past, the Japanese plums have been creating quite a sensation in the Southern States, where the trees grow well; but it is too soon to say how well they will bear fruit in all our different localities.

Like other plums, a stiff clay soil is best, though they will grow anywhere if the soil is rich.

These plums range in size more like a peach than a plum, as some weigh four ounces.

The following are the best varieties:

BOTANKIA.—(KNOWN AS KELSEY.)

A large, greenish, red, heart-shaped plum, often weighing four ounces. Rather firm, with small seed; fine flavor. Ripens in August.

BOTAN PLUM.

A rapid growing tree, with very large, reddish yellow fruit, which ripens in August.

OGON PLUM.

A large, yellow variety, which is said to ripen early. We have not fruited it yet.

PRUNUS SIMONI.—(APRICOT PLUM.)

This new plum is a native of Northern China

and is a valuable fruit. It resembles a flattish, brick-red tomato. The flavor is delicious and the perfume is exquisite.

JAPAN PERSIMMONS.

The value of the Japan persimmon and its merit in comparison with other fruits is not yet fully known. This fruit has been brought to the greatest perfection in Japan by selecting the finest varieties, and grafting and giving good cultivation. Like peaches and apples, they do not produce the same from seed; in fact, the finest varieties have no seed.

The different varieties in Japan are as numerous as apples in the United States. Some ripening in October, while others will keep till March.

Some are fine for eating in a raw state, while others are used for drying, like prunes or figs. This process is done in Japan "by picking the immature astringent fruit, and drying it after peeling the skin with a knife. This dried fruit is packed in wooden cases, covered lightly with a lid, when the white saccharine substance appears upon the surface of the fruit, as with prunes or figs, to which latter it is equal in flavor."

By some persons this fruit is not considered good, for the reason they get the wrong kind, or some not properly ripened. They are never good if ripened in a light, dry place. Put them in a

cold, dark place, where they will collect a little moisture, and when they do ripen no one will call them astringent or tasteless, or anything but good.

They begin to ripen in October, but "the crop" does not generally ripen until after a good frost. If it be desired to keep them a long time they should be gathered before frost, and packed away in a dry, cool place. If you wish to ripen some quickly, leave them on the tree until after a hard frost, or if you have already gathered, put them out of doors at night where they will freeze, when you thaw them out they will be ripe.

The soil best adapted to the Japan persimmon is the same as where our native varieties grow. In size this fruit is about as large as our apples, weighing from six to twelve ounces. The color is generally orange or vermilion, and it is the most beautiful on the tree of any fruit we know. The tree being suited to the climate, bears bountifully when quite young. We think it a good fruit for the South as it keeps well, ships well, and is in much demand in Northern markets, while it cannot be grown except in the South.

Most of the Japan persimmon trees sold in this country are imported from Japan, as they are very hard to make in this climate. Consequently they will sell for a high price for some time to come.

The best varieties are the Kurokume, Hyakume and Yumato.

Good cultivation is of the greatest importance when the trees are young.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PEACH.

The latitude from 33 to 36 degrees, and a little further both North and South on the Atlantic Coast, is the peach belt of the United States; consequently fine peaches will grow there, with very little cultivation and often with no cultivation whatever, but as you go North or South, from the peach belt, more care and trouble is required, depending on the locality. In the North the winters are so cold that trees are often frozen to death, unless very hardy varieties are planted and a sheltered situation selected.

In the South the Winters are so short, that the trees do not get rest enough to make the buds push with vigor sufficient to make fruit, consequently many varieties bear but sparsely here.

But no matter where it is planted, the peach must have good drainage, as it will not succeed well with water around the roots. Rich, sandy

soil, where there is no transpiration water, is the best place for peaches.

Peach trees are budded by nurserymen, so they can always tell precisely what varieties they have for sale; as the tree will always be the same as the one from which the bud is taken, no matter what kind of a peach the root is.

Budded peaches are not as certain a crop as seedlings, in this climate, but if you want certain named varieties, or very early ones, you must plant budded trees, and take the risk of the crop.

Seedling trees last much longer, and are more certain bearers, but nurserymen do not make them, because they can not guarantee them in any particular, as to time of ripening, whether free or cling stones, or even color of the peach. Seedlings seldom produce the same variety, yet good peaches are often grown from seed, and when good varieties are obtained they make the best trees, as they last a long time, and bear good crops of fruit.

Yellow peaches more generally produce the same from seed, than white or red varieties. The following is a good way to grow peach seed:

In the Fall or early Winter make a smooth, level place in the garden, and put down a layer of peach seed, cover them with about half an inch of earth. When the ground freezes the seed will also freeze and they will sprout and grow in the Spring.

Select a place where you want a row of peach trees, and take the little plants, as soon as up, with the seed attached, and plant them four feet apart in the row. Then plant another row fifteen feet from the first, and so on till you have planted all your desire. The ground between the peach rows may be planted in some kind of a low, growing hoed crop.

If the young trees are well cultivated, they will bear in two years, when the mean ones can be dug up, and the good ones left. I speak of planting four feet apart, as we usually get from seed about one good tree in four. Be sure to dig up every bad one, and let the good ones have a chance to grow.

Small peach trees are always best for planting as they can be dug up with the roots more perfect and the long life of the peach tree depends on the perfection of the roots when planted.

Never plant large peach trees, if you can avoid it, for they will certainly be short lived. Get small trees, cut them off one foot from the ground, and never prune them up from the ground.

Every Winter the branches may be shortened in to keep the heads round and low, which will give plenty of bearing wood for the following year. If the trees grow fast there will be from six inches to a foot and a half of wood at the ends of the branches, outside the fruit buds, which may be cut

off, without detriment to the tree, and thereby much improving the fruit. Care should be taken not to cut back far enough to cut away too many of the fruit buds, which are easily distinguished from leaf buds, as they are usually double.

In regard to varieties, every nurseryman claims to have the earliest and best; but all succeed in some localities and fail in others.

The following list will be found sufficiently large to select from, for home use, and we would not advise any one to plant peaches largely, for market, in this climate:

ARKANSAW TRAVELLER.

This is conceded by all nurserymen to be the earliest peach known. It comes to us well recommended. We have not fruited it yet.

BRIGG'S RED MAY.

Medium size, highly colored, of fine flavor and very prolific.

AMSDEN.

The leading and most reliable early peach of Baltimore. The tree bears well and fruit of fine size. Ripens in June.

ALEXANDER.

A seedling of the Amsden, which it resembles very much, though a little larger and a little later.

EARLY RIVERS.

Large, light, straw color, with pink cheek ; juicy, with rich flavor.

HYNE'S SURPRISE.

Resembles the Alexander, but perfectly freestone.

ELBERTA.

Very large and high flavored. A Southern seedling.

AMELIA.

A very large, highly colored peach. Originated in Georgia.

FOSTER.

A large, yellow peach. Ripens last of June.

CHINESE CLING.

One of the finest peaches for the South. The tree grows well and bears regular crops of very large fruit. Ripens last of July.

RINGOLD'S MAMMOTH CLING.

Said to be the largest peach known. Good quality, and always sells for a high price.

BLOOD CLING.

An old peach, of fair quality, and a general favorite wherever planted. Ripens in August.

THURBER.

A freestone peach, a seedling of the Chinese Cling, originated in Georgia and comes well recommended as one of the best late peaches for the South.

PICQUET'S LATE.

Very large, yellow peach, with red cheek. Rich, sweet, and of the highest flavor. The best of all the late peaches.

NIX'S LATE.

A very large, late, white cling of the finest quality. A sure bearer.

NECTARINES.

The Nectarine is a peach with a smooth skin, and originally came from peach seed. In fact, if Nectarine seed are planted they more often produce peaches than Nectarines. The fruit is never very large, and being budded, they are uncertain bearers in this latitude, hence, unless the smooth skin is an object, we would advise you to let Nectarines alone.

They require the same care, soil and cultivation as the peach.

CHAPTER VIII.

APPLES FOR THE GULF STATES.

It is thought by many persons that it is useless to plant apples in this climate; but our experience convinces us that good apples may be grown here if the right varieties are selected.

When people bestow a little more thought and study upon fruit culture, they will find they can grow very good early apples—such as ripen in June and July—but every variety will not succeed.

In order to succeed with apples here, Southern varieties must be planted. We have tried thirty varieties, and find among them four worth planting, which will produce good fruit, in paying quantities. Many others will produce some good fruit, but do not bear enough to pay for their trouble.

The Early Red Streak, is one of our best apples. The tree grows well, bears bountifully, and fruit ripens perfectly in July. The size is fine and the flavor good.

The Early Harvest is our earliest apple. It often ripens the last of May. The tree is a rather slow grower, but hardy and bears young.

The Red June and Yellow June are both good apples, and succeed well. Ripen in June.

It will be noticed that we do not recommend any late varieties, though there may be some, but we have not found them, that will bear fruit in paying quantities.

CHAPTER IX.

FIGS.

Figs grow well, and bear abundantly in all the Gulf States, and we strongly advise every one who has room, to plant a few fig trees for family use.

Almost any soil, unless low and wet, will grow good figs. They should be planted thirty feet apart, and if it seems a great distance, you must remember that fig trees attain great age and size, and it is best to give them plenty of room, and utilize the space between them for plum or peach trees, or anything that can be removed when the figs require the room.

Fig trees need no pruning except to train to one stem, by cutting down the suckers, so as to force the growth into the main trunk. If this be done for two or three seasons, the tree will grow rapidly and harden its wood, so as to endure any cold that we have during winter.

They begin to bear the second year after plant-

ing, but do not come into full bearing until nine or ten years old.

The fig is a delicious fruit, whether fresh, dried, preserved or crystalized, and if we could be certain of good weather, at the time of ripening, it would be one of our most profitable orchard crops for canning or preserving on an extensive scale. The heavy rains we are liable to have during "Fig Season" make it too uncertain a crop for one to venture.

CHAPTER X.

QUINCE TREES.

Some varieties of quinces grow well in this climate, and are worth planting for their large size, and beautiful appearance.

The Orange quince is of a bright, golden yellow, and the finest flavored of all quinces, but rather a shy bearer, and in some localities will not bear at all.

The Hong Kong is a Chinese variety, and like all the Chinese fruits, succeeds well here. It grows to a large tree, and is very ornamental, with fruit often weighing more than two pounds, which will remain on the tree until December.

Quince trees require rich soil and a gallon of salt every year to each tree will help them to grow and bear well

CHAPTER XI.

THE ORANGE.

Of oranges there are many varieties which grow well in Florida, and all along the Gulf, in sheltered situations, but do not stand the climate well in the interior. Sour and bitter oranges are the most hardy, and are often used as stocks for the sweet varieties; they are also often used for shade and ornamental evergreens in localities where the sweet varieties will not grow at all.

CHAPTER XII.

STRAWBERRY CULTURE.

Probably no country in the world can equal the Gulf States in growing fine strawberries. Our rich soil, mild climate and moist atmosphere, all tend to make the fruit very fine and keep the plants a long time in bearing.

By planting in the proper soil, giving good culture and a liberal supply of water in dry weather, it is easy to have this delicious fruit for three or even four consecutive months.

Where land is plentiful, the place for strawber-

ries should be selected a year in advance, and kept cleanly cultivated, so there will be as little grass and weeds to contend with as possible.

THE SOIL.

If we could have our choice in soil, we would prefer a rich, sandy loam, but any kind of land will grow fine strawberries, provided it is rich; if it is stiff clay, a liberal supply of well rotted stable manure should be used to make it loose and friable.

The best varieties to plant for common cultivation are Wilson's Albany and Crescent Seedling mixed. We say mixed, as the Crescent is not perfect in its flowers, and will not bear well by itself, but when mixed with some perfect flowering kind, it bears bountifully. The Sharpless is a fine strawberry, very large and beautiful, and bears well in this climate. We could give a long list of varieties, with their relative merits, but our space will not permit us to do so now.

Always buy plants near home, so as to have them as fresh as possible, though they may cost a little more than from a long distance away; often so many will die by long transportation, that what you have left will not be found cheap; besides those that do grow, will start so feebly that they will not bear much the first year.

November is the best month for planting, though

with a wet October, they might be planted a little sooner. If the fall is very dry, it is better to wait till December, as the plants do not grow well if set out in very dry weather.

In preparing the ground for garden culture, spade it very deep and give a liberal supply of well rotted stable manure; set the plants two in each place, two feet apart each way. We prefer this to planting single plants eighteen inches apart, as we get about the same number of plants on the ground. They produce equally as much, and it is less work to cultivate them.

For field culture, plow in broad, flat beds, six feet wide and very deep. Put a liberal supply of well rotted manure in the middle of the beds and mix it well with the soil. Plant two rows on each bed, eighteen inches apart and two feet apart in the row; having the plants in one row opposite the space in the other. There should be two plants in each place, the same as in garden culture. Guard against getting the beds too high, as they will not hold the moisture so well as broad, flat ones. The wide space between the rows—about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet—can be worked with a horse and cultivator; a plow is too coarse an implement for strawberry culture, and the narrow space can be worked with a hoe. The advantage of double rows is, the wide, flat beds hold the moisture better than single rows, and the berries can be picked more conveniently.

without walking on the beds, which is quite detrimental to the plants during the wet weather in April. Give good cultivation, keeping the ground loose and mellow on the top; do not cultivate deep, especially near the plants.

The varieties mentioned above do not make many runners till they are about done bearing, but it is well to cut them off as they appear, by so doing the season of bearing may be lengthened.

As to early and late varieties, there is very little difference here; if it is a warm, rainy Fall and Winter, you will have some blooms and berries from November on till the main crop begins with the April rains. This crop continues till the supply of water on the blossoms and fruit gives out. Water is one of the best fertilizers of strawberries; not only must the roots be moist, but the leaves, flowers and fruit must have an even, and plentiful supply. If when the spring showers cease, you can afford to water them, you can have a plentiful supply of berries for at least four months, that is, till July. In the North and West the strawberry season is about three weeks long, and of course all the berries of a crop ripen at once. But in our favored climate, by a little pains, it may be prolonged indefinitely.

CHAPTER XIII.

GRAPES.

The latitude for which we write this, cannot be called good for any grape except the Scuppernong.

The climate is too damp, and with a wet July, when most grapes ripen, they will rot badly, or they will not ripen at all. But if they are planted on high, sand soil, and the weather is favorable, some beautiful grapes may be grown in this climate.

In spite of many failures, grapes are worth planting in favorable localities, as, by giving the vines good cultivation, you can have a good crop of well ripened grapes in one year and a half after planting the vines.

There are many varieties claiming a high reputation for ripening well, but we generally find that the location is favorable, and the season has much to do with the ripening of the fruit.

Good varieties for the climate are Concord, Herbemont, Catawba, Iona, Hartford, Prolific and Delaware.

PLANTING.

Plant vines with good roots. If they are small, all the better. Cut the tops off within four inches of the ground. Dig broad holes, deep enough to

cover all the roots three or four inches deep.

When the vines have well started to grow, rub off all but the two best shoots. Let these run as far as they will.

A couple of stakes will do for the vines to run on the first year.

The second year you will need a trellis; this can be made of barbed wire on posts, like a fence, or common No. 10 wire, or slats, are equally good.

The second year, about December, the strong vines should be cut back one half and tied to the trellis.

A good rule for pruning grape vines is, cut the strong vines back one-half, and cut the weak ones out altogether.

THE SCUPPERNONG GRAPE.

This differs as widely from other grapes as peaches do from plums; and require far more difference in the treatment and cultivation. For while other grapes require pruning to make them bear, the Scuppernong will not bear if pruned like other grapes.

Scuppernong vines do not grow from cuttings, but must be made from layers: when rooted the layers should be cut away from the main vine and allowed to grow one year in the nursery, in order to make good, strong vines for planting.

Sandy soil is best adapted to the scuppernong.

though the vines grow anywhere, and will stand considerable water, but they do not usually bear well on bottom lands, though they do well on clay loam with hard subsoil. On rich, alluvial lands root pruning, or cramping the roots in any way, will force them to bear.

PLANTING.

First ascertain if your land is adapted to growing scuppernongs, if it is, you can plant them with a confidence that they will succeed.

Then prepare the ground the same as for any other crop. Dig holes four inches deep and wide enough to straighten out all the roots. Plant forty feet apart, and cultivate the same as cotton, the entire Summer and Fall. Put down a good stake to each vine, for the first year; when the vines have well-started to grow, leave one or two of the best shoots, and rub off all the others.

The land between the vines may be planted in any kind of a hoed crop; the vines will not be much in the way.

If the vines grow well, they will need an arbor the second year, which should be made as follows:

Put down four posts ten feet apart, in a square, with a vine in the center. Cover the top with strong slats and as the vines grow, spread them out as evenly as possible on the arbor, and tie them down to keep the wind from blowing them

all into one bunch. The more even the vines are spread on the arbor, the better they will bear.

The arbor may be extended on either side at any time, as the vines grow.

Six and a half, or seven feet, is the most convenient height for the arbor.

The scuppernong is well suited to this climate and lives to a great age.

It commences to bear about the fourth Summer after planting.

The fruit begins to ripen the first of August and continues till October. It is delicious, with a fine musky odor. Fine for preserves and jelly, and will in time be the great wine grape of the South.

This vine has no insect enemies, and the fruit always ripens well, consequently it is becoming more and more popular as its worth is known.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRANSPLANTING FRUIT TREES.

In planting an orchard, the ground should be plowed in broad, flat beds, with deep furrows between the rows, to carry off the water. December and January are the best months for transplanting fruit trees.

In this climate fruit trees should be closely

pruned at the time of planting. Trees should generally be cut back one-half, or more, that is, if the tree is six feet high it should be cut back to three feet; if four feet, cut back to two feet.

In transplanting LeConte pear trees, we generally cut them back to two feet; even if they are six or eight feet high.

When trees are received from the nursery, the roots should be immediately covered in the ground, and taken out as wanted for planting. It is a very bad practice to have a number of trees lying in the sun while planting.

THE DISTANCE TO PLANT TREES.

Pear and apple trees should be planted 20 or 25 feet apart; but if it be desirable to plant pear and peach trees on the same ground, the pear trees may be planted 30 feet and a peach tree between them. If peach trees are planted by themselves, 15 feet is a good distance for them. Plum trees may be planted 12 feet. Figs should have the same distance as pears.

When the holes are laid off, be sure and dig them big, and deep enough to take in all the roots without cramping; throwing the dirt from the top of the ground on one side, and that deeper down on the other, so that when the tree is planted, all the dirt thrown in around it, will be taken from the top of the ground.

Trees should be planted the same depth they

stood in the nursery. When the holes are dug, one person should hold up the tree while another throws the dirt, selecting fine, clean, rich dirt, without clods, sticks or manure, and throw it in loosely—when nearly filled up throw in a bucket of water to settle down the dirt, put a little dry dirt on top, and the job is finished.

Guard against planting too deep. Trees planted too deep will not flourish; we often find good trees on good soil, but they will not grow, for no other cause than they are planted too deep.

CHAPTER XV.

PRUNING FRUIT TREES.

A great deal has been said in times gone by about pruning trees, to produce fruitfulness, but this craze is now exploded, and the motto now is, trees first and fruit afterwards. Trees that require pruning to make them bear, generally do not suit the climate or their location or soil, and all the pruning that can be done will not usually make them bear very much.

Trees usually commence bearing well at about one-sixth their longevity, and all efforts to make

them bear sooner, is generally detrimental to the health of the tree.

People often plant trees and give them no cultivation, and they do not grow as much in five years as they ought to grow in two, and then wonder they do not bear fruit, and think something ought to be done to produce fruitfulness; and they are right, something ought to be done, and that something is cultivating and not pruning. People naturally love to prune, and hate to cultivate, consequently everybody prunes and very few cultivate their trees. When more cultivating is done, and less pruning, people will have more fruit.

We seldom prune more than to bring the trees to proper shape, and would much prefer to let nature shape them, to pruning at all, for it is astonishing how perfectly she will do her work, though it may take years to do it.

If trees are cut low when planted, and let alone where they have free air and light, with no shade near, they will generally form beautiful heads in two or three years; but if there is shade on one side they will turn towards the light, and all the pruning that can be done, will not make the trees assumes fine shapes.

It is a very good idea to know how to prune a little, for, as a rule, people who prune at all generally prune too much.

We often hear a person say, I must prune up

my fruit trees; it would be much better if they would prune them down, that is, keep them low.

Fruit trees in this climate should always have low heads to protect the stems from the sun, and keep the roots cool in hot, dry weather. The Winter or early Spring, before the buds start, is the time for pruning. Summer pruning may sometimes be advantageous, but it is so generally detrimental that we say letting alone is the best Summer pruning. When you have pruned in the Winter let everything alone till the next year. At the time of planting, the trees should be cut back one half, or more if the tree is tall; that is, if a tree is six feet, cut back to three feet.

Pear trees should be branched at one foot from the ground as they will naturally do if cut back as recommended above.

Every Winter for two years one-half of the past year's growth should be cut off from the top, and the side branches let alone.

Apple and plum trees require very little pruning after planting. The apple should sometimes be thinned out a little, and the suckers cut away from the roots.

For pruning peach trees we refer the reader to the article on peach culture

Summer pruning consists in pinching back certain shoots which are growing too rapidly, in order that weak ones may keep up with them and form

fine shaped heads that suit the fancy of the fruit grower.

This is a bad practice and we are thankful it is not very common. The most pernicious habit, and one of which ninety-nine fruit growers in every hundred is guilty of, is pulling the sprouts off the body of the tree from the ground up to the first branches. These should be left on, for if the tree roots make more sap than the top can utilize then the tree will make sprouts on the body. These sprouts will enlarge the body so that more sap can pass to the top and hence the top will grow more by the sprouts being left on during Summer.

Every bud that is pinched off, and every sprout that is pulled off in Summer retards the growth of the tree, hence we say letting alone is the best Summer pruning.

When fruit trees are transplanted they should be closely pruned, and given good cultivation, then let alone during Summer. When Winter comes all sprouts may be cut off and the tree properly pruned.

SUMMER PRUNING OF FIGS AND GRAPE VINES.

Fig roots are generally planted out without much top, as the Winter usually kills the tops of young fig trees. When they have well started to grow all the shoots should be cut off except one, selecting of course the best. By keeping the

other shoots cut off the growth of the entire season may be thrown into one stem, which will stand the following Winter much better than if all the shoots were allowed to grow.

The Scuppernong grape should be trained to one stem, and all other shoots kept off till it is long enough to put on an arbor overhead. Other grapes may be trained to two stems the first summer.

CHAPTER XVI.

WATERING PLANTS.

Plants which are likely to require watering should be so planted that it can be done properly. Flower beds should be high enough to drain well, and yet be flat, with a little incline to the center. Small shrubs and trees should have the ground flat around them, with a ridge a foot from the tree to hold the water.

When small plants are in a row, a drill may be made by the side, to keep the water from running away. This drill should be filled with water. When the water is soaked in fill the drill with dirt, so the moisture will not dry out quickly. If a crust has formed on the ground, break it up with a hoe

or rake before watering; the water will soak in better and do more good. During a drouth, a good drenching once in two weeks is better than a slight watering every day. Many persons in a dry season shower their plants daily, thereby washing the foliage and flowers free from dust, who wonder why their plants did not grow and flourish. They never noticed that the amount of water they put on, scarcely dampened the earth, and of course the roots were perfectly dry. To such people we say, you wash your face and hands this dry, dusty weather, but does that prevent thirst? Do you not sometimes take a good, big drink of water? Now that is the way with your plants, it refreshes them to wash the dust from their leaves, but their roots are thirsty for a good drink of water.

When they ask how much, we tell them to saturate the earth for at least a foot around each plant. A plant two or more feet high wants at least three gallons at a time, and will flourish if given that amount once in two or three weeks, when it would droop, perhaps even die, if merely showered every day.

MANURING FRUIT TREES.

Much of our land in the Gulf States is so rich it does not require manure for fruit trees, but some land would be greatly benefitted by it.

Manure should be applied to bearing trees, in

Winter or early Spring, but young trees may be manured at any time before June, but they should not be manured later than that, as it will make too much Fall growth of wood, and lack fruit buds.

Stable manure is good for all kinds of trees. It should be thrown on the top of the ground in the Winter, and should be used liberally if the land is poor.

Cotton seed meal is one of the best manures to promote growth; it acts quickly, and if put on in March, will be exhausted by the end of the growing season, so the wood will ripen up well. It is especially good for pear trees. In applying cotton seed meal, and other fine commercial manures, the dirt should be pulled away for about three feet, all around the tree, to the depth of two inches, the manure mixed with the dirt and then pulled back again. In this way, the double object is accomplished of manuring and cultivating.

Use one quart of cotton seed meal to each tree. Ashes are good for peach trees, one bushel to each tree.

Kainit (German Potash) may be used for all kinds of bearing fruit trees, five to ten pounds to each tree.

Ground bones are especially good for grape vines.

Some things, not manure in themselves, act very beneficially on the soil, especially for bearing trees.

Salt thrown on the top of the ground, around

plum and quince trees, at the rate of from two to four quarts to the tree, will often make them bear profusely.

Lime is good for bearing apple trees, four quarts to each tree.

MULCHING.

Mulching is putting around a tree or plant a quantity of litter, such as old hay, straw, corn-stalks, old grass, old baggasse, or almost anything that will cover up the ground and keep the grass down.

Sawdust is not good, as it is apt to mix with the soil, is slow to rot, and does not keep the grass down.

New baggasse should not be used for mulch, it contains too much acid, but old baggasse is good.

Mulching is very important in Summer, especially with large trees, where it is not convenient to cultivate, but with young trees cultivation is always best.

Mulching keeps the ground cool in hot weather. and moist in dry weather.

Cotton seed makes the ground too warm and breeds insects and should not be used.

TREE WASH.

The following is good for the trunks and large limbs of fruit trees.

It should be put on about the time the buds start in the Spring:

WASH FOR PEAR TREES.

One pound of saltpetre, two pounds of salt, dissolved in five gallons of water.

WASH FOR PEACH AND PLUM TREES.

One quart of coal oil, one pound of concentrated lye, dissolved in five gallons of water.

WASH FOR APPLE TREES.

One pound of sulphur, two quarts of lime, dissolved in sufficient water to make white-wash. A little lamp black can be added, to make it dark colored.

ANTS.

In some places ants are destructive to fruit trees, but by using the proper means, they are easy to get rid of. If trees are properly planted, ants are not apt to trouble them; trees should be planted on broad, flat beds, with deep furrows between the rows to carry off the water, and the ground made a little lower where the tree stands. When it rains, the water will run down to the tree, and pass through the ground, to the furrows between the rows. Should the ants insist on working around a tree, make a levee around it and put in half a dozen buckets of water, and they will give you no more trouble.

CHAPTER XVII.

PECAN CULTURE.

Much has been said and written of late about the profit of pecan culture, mostly by persons having no experience, either in growing the trees or gathering the nuts. We are not among the number who can see the profits of every business except the one we are engaged in, and cannot see the expenses.

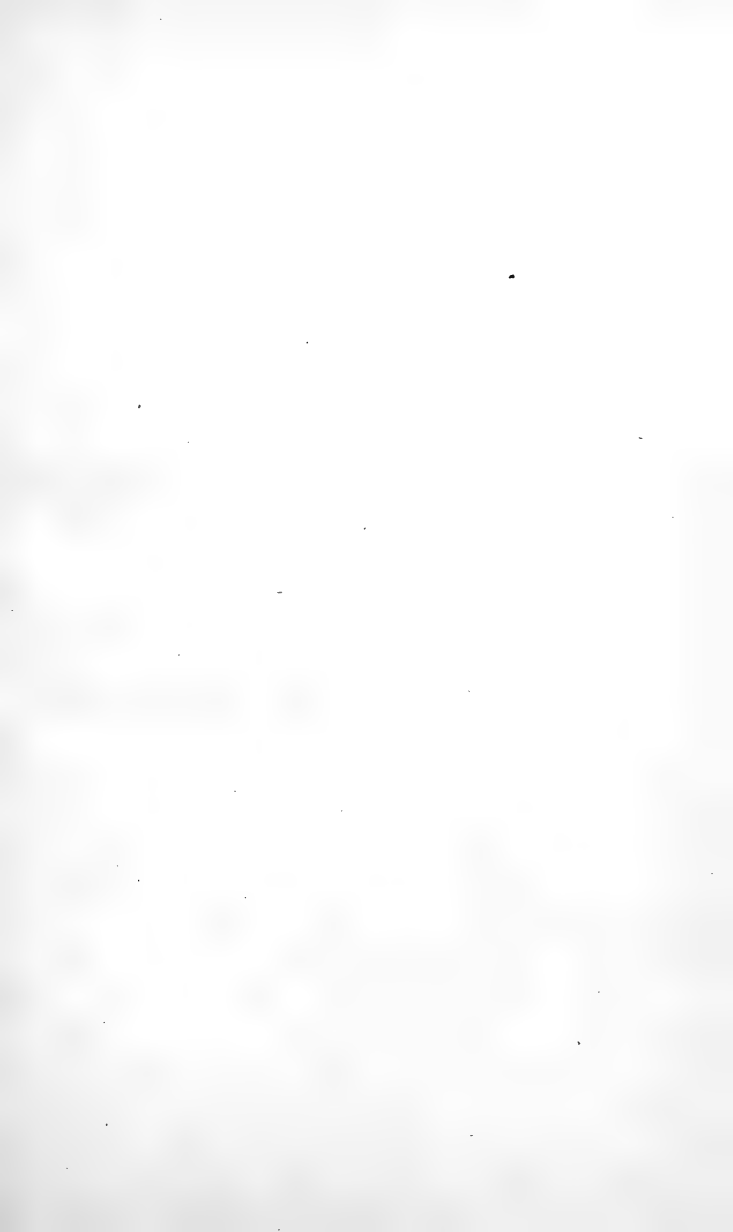
From the best information we can get, not one seedling tree in five will produce nuts like or even equal to those planted, and all the others will be so small they will not pay for gathering and shipping, consequently it will be necessary to plant 5,000 trees to get 1,000 good ones.

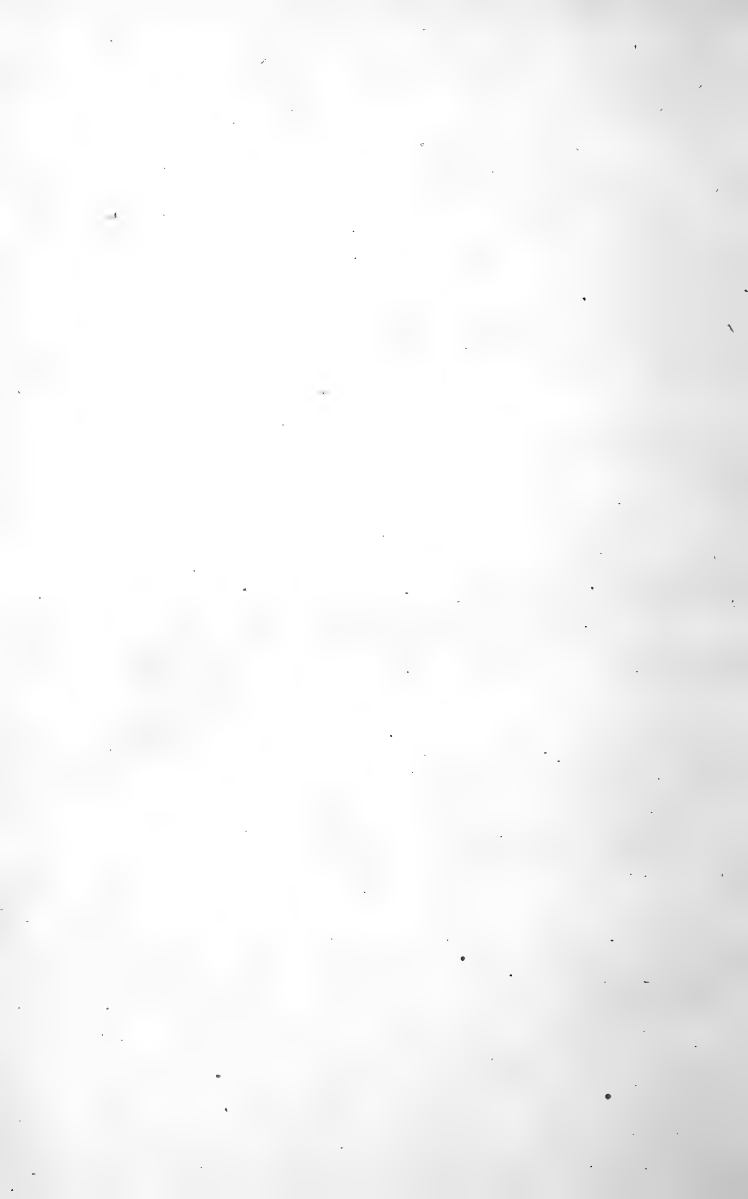
Though pecan culture is not very expensive, yet there is no good thing without some trouble and expense. We think it will pay if properly prosecuted, but not by planting seedling pecans, wait twenty years for them to bear, and then have four-fifths of them prove worthless. The trees should all be grafted from reliable bearing trees, of extra large size, which will enable you to know with certainty—as with other grafted fruits—what kind you have; they will bear fruit in about half the

time of seedlings, and the nuts will always sell for a high price.

Good grafted pecan trees can be bought for fifty cents each; they should be planted fifty feet apart, which allows about sixteen trees to the acre. The land can be cultivated in other crops, about as well for many years to come, as if there were no trees on it.

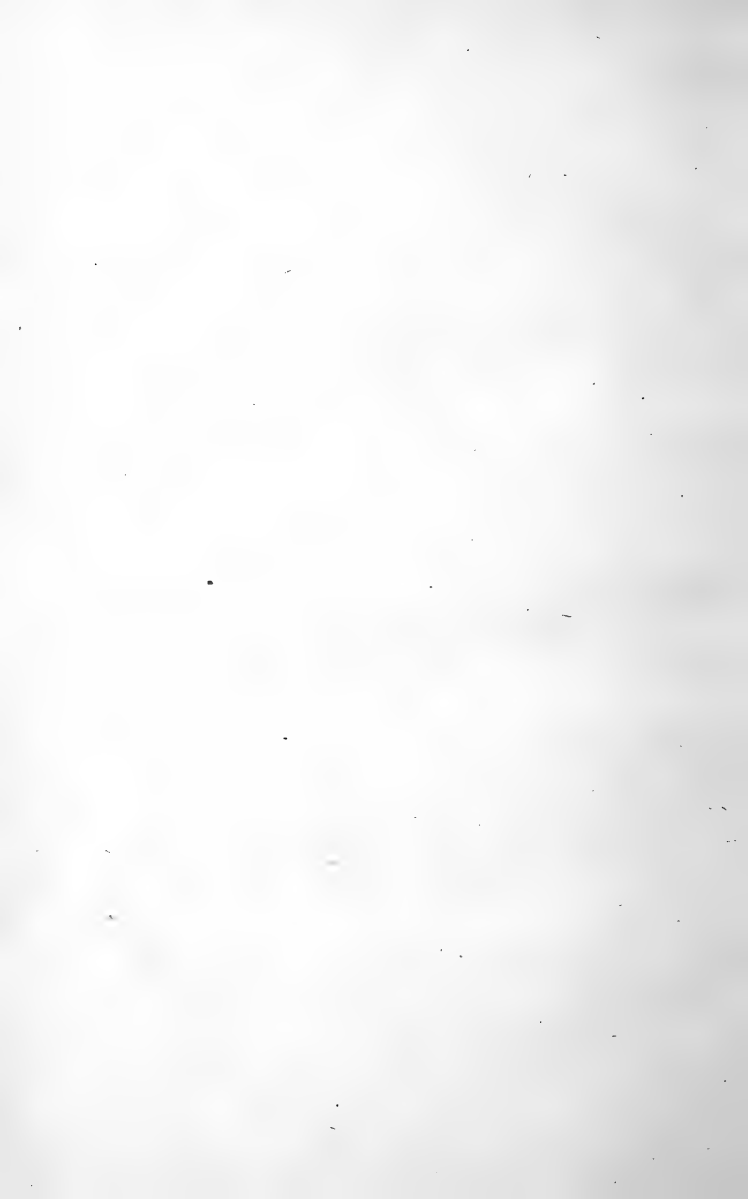
The same cultivation that is proper for cotton, is good for pecan trees, they can be cultivated with the crop, and will bear much quicker for being well cultivated. Young trees should be protected from stock during winter.





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MOUNT HOPE
NURSERY,
WASHINGTON, LA.

Fruit Trees Grown in Louisiana for the

GULF STATES,

THAT WILL PRODUCE FRUIT.

LE CONTE PEAR TREES,
KIEFFER PEAR TREES,
JAPAN PERSIMMONS.

FOUR VARIETIES OF

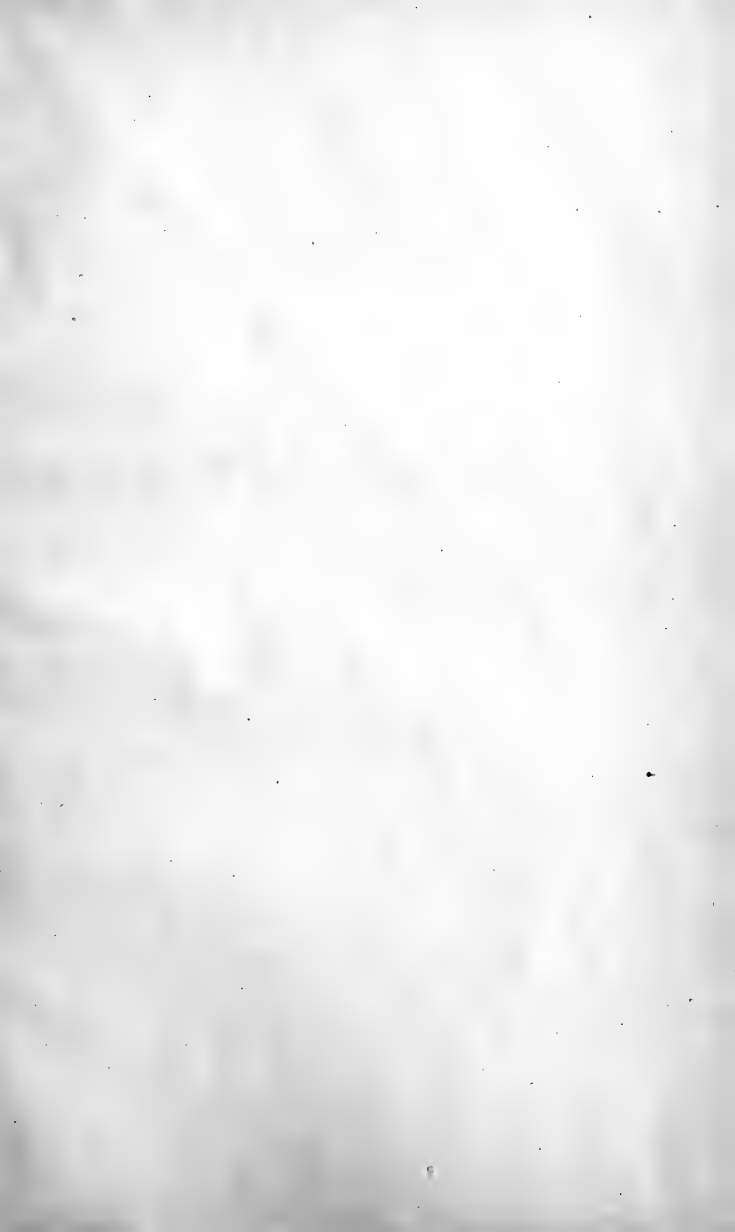
JAPANESE PLUMS,

Which are very large; also a General Assortment of

FRUIT TREES, EVERGREENS
AND ROSES.

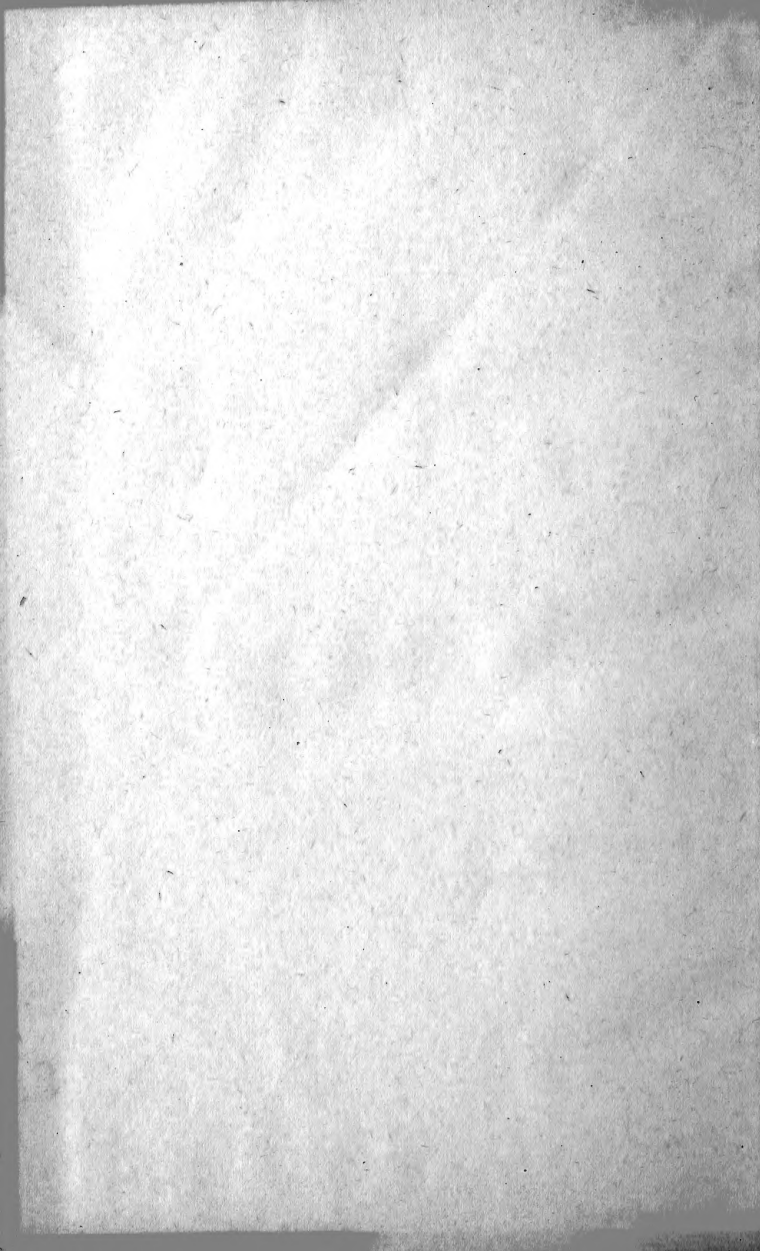
SEND FOR DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF FRUIT TREES,
ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS AND ROSES. ADDRESS

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