

WORK FOR THE COMING MONTH.

THE ORCHARD.

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PRACTICALLY the earliest signs of life in the fruit-tree after its winter rest appear with the month of August. The swelling of the buds heralds the approach of spring, and before the month expires the profusion of pink and white blossom of the peach, nectarine, and plum will have changed the orchard from its barren winter state to a thing of beauty. But the beauty of the scene is apt to appeal more strongly to the orchardist who has his work well in hand than it will to the man who has more or less back work to make up. To the orchardist in this position the blossoming season is more a source of worry than admiration, as he well knows that in a comparatively short time the full burst of spring will be at hand. This stage not only means that important work must be immediately attended to, but it precludes all possibility of satisfactorily carrying out incompleting work of the dormant season.

Apart from work unduly carried over, that normally required in an established orchard for the month is not heavy. It is too early, and the soil is too wet in most instances for spring ploughing. Pruning and winter spraying has already been completed, with the exception possibly of finishing off the pruning of pip-fruits. This and the application of the late winter fungoid sprays in respect to stone-fruits, and the second oil application for the control of woolly aphid in cases where this plan is being adopted, should comprise the main work for the month. At the same time there will be many instances where much additional work is required to be done. Where necessary, all forms of dormant-season work can still be carried on. These include pruning generally, spraying for the control of the various sucking-insects and fungoid diseases, the selection and preservation of scions for grafting, &c. With regard to the planting of fruit-trees, shelter-belts, &c., August is, of course, in respect to many districts, about the best time the work can be undertaken.