

THE ORCHARD.

PREPARING FOR EXTENSIONS.

THE next two months will keep growers very busy picking, packing, and marketing all midsummer and late varieties of apples and pears. This doubtless will occupy a large portion of their time, but it is poor orchard practice to complete one job before the next one is well thought out and planned. The question of further planting will have to be considered, and where extension of orchard areas is contemplated it will be necessary to fix upon varieties. When this has been settled an order should be placed early with a good reliable nurseryman, so as to ensure supply of the trees required. Early selection and preparation of the land should also be carried out, thereby giving the young trees a chance to do their best. The object should be to select only the best varieties. Until this is done we shall always have unproductive trees that never will prove worth the space they occupy.

The land should be given a first ploughing during the autumn, and any fencing that may be necessary may be done in any spare time. This will enable growers to keep abreast of their work. Fruit-trees will do well on different varieties of soil if they are given fair treatment with respect to drainage, shelter, and cultivation.

AUTUMN SPRAYING.

The only spraying necessary during March may be for woolly aphis. This pest has given considerable trouble in the past, but indications are that it is one which will no longer be dreaded. The natural enemy, *Aphelinus mali*, is doing good work in many orchards. Should the weather continue hot and dry it may be wise to make a late application of arsenate of lead for the control of codlin-moth and Leaf-roller caterpillar on late varieties of apples, after which the spray-pump can be put away for a short period. It is good practice to destroy all infected and diseased fruit which has fallen to the ground in the orchard, also any that may be in cases in packing-sheds. This cannot be stressed too strongly. The more pests and diseases held over through the winter the greater will be the danger of infection during the following year.

This is the time when the orchardist should take careful stock of his failures and successes during the past season so as to profit thereby in the future. Every orchardist should keep some form of record in which all spraying data are regularly entered up, in order that he may be able to amend his programme in the future as experience determines.

MARKETING.

It should be the grower's constant policy to put up a good article and make no attempt to deceive the buyer. Complaints are sometimes made about inspection, but even supposing the Inspector is passed there is still the buyer and consumer. He is the critic and the person who must be pleased in order to create a demand. Given satisfaction, the demand for good sound fruit will increase year by year.

—L. Paynter, Orchard Instructor, Christchurch.