

## CITRUS-CULTURE.

In many citrus-orchards in the Auckland District the autumn blossoming will be considerably in advance of that of previous seasons, and promises to be on the heavy side. Some growers are somewhat neglectful in applying their insecticide for the control of scale insects, thrips, &c. This is a most important undertaking, as no doubt those who have neglected it over a period will have found to their sorrow, for the results are readily shown on the fruits, and much labour is required in washing them before they are marketable. It would be as well for those growers who still have some trouble at this period with sucking-insects generally to apply another spray as early in the coming month as possible. Red oil may be used at 1-40, or, as a substitute, commercial lime-sulphur, 1-35. If the latter is employed it would be as well to use the same compound, at 1-35 or 1-40, for the control of fungoid diseases when the fruit has set.

Those citrus-growers requiring to make an application of chemical fertilizers in the autumn are advised to carry out this work immediately. A well-balanced manure is, of course, essential, but it is as well to point out here that an overdose of nitrogenous matter, especially that which is readily available, is injudicious at this stage. It would only result in a large amount of sappy growth, which would be immediately nipped off should frosty weather occur later.

It is noticed that in some groves—especially the small ones—the lemons are not being harvested as often as they should be. It is not advisable to leave fruit on until it becomes tree-ripe, as this takes considerable nutriment from the tree, and such fruit is generally not of equal commercial value to that taken at the “silver” stage or a little sooner. The size most favoured is  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in., when the fruits may be successfully stored and cured, and, if properly treated, become a good commercial product.

—J. W. Collard, Orchard Instructor, Auckland.

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**POULTRY-KEEPING.**

## PRECOCIOUS PULLETS.

THE incorrect information so often given that early maturity is an indication of egg-laying power, and that premature laying is the sign of the desirable breeding-bird, has led many poultry-keepers to over-force their pullets with rich foods such as meat, milk, &c., with the result that many of the young birds have commenced to lay at about four and a half months old. This precocity, of course, is very undesirable, because under the conditions mentioned the birds cannot grow into vigorous stock. Further, from a productive point of view they will prove unprofitable, and it is not unlikely that their eggs will never be of a satisfactory size.

Later on such pullets will be undesirable for breeding purposes. Where fowls have been bred to an extreme egg-producing objective generation after generation, the natural inclination to lay is so strongly developed that no forcing methods are needed to make them lay as soon as they have reached the correct productive age. In the