

CITRUS FRUITGROWING IN NEW ZEALAND.

Lecturette by P. EVERETT, Orchard Instructor, Thames and Bay of Plenty district, broadcast from Radio Station 2YA, Wellington, July, 1929.

It should first be explained that the name "citrus" is a generic name for a number of plants, and includes lemons, oranges, limes, citrons, grapefruits, mandarins, and shaddocks. All these fruits are to be found growing in New Zealand to a greater or lesser extent.

Most of the citrus family are natives of India and other warm parts of Asia; consequently the colder parts of this country are not generally suitable for their growth. The best localities for their culture are in the east coast region of the Auckland Province. In the year 1928 the area in orange and lemon trees in Auckland was 875 acres, as compared with 160 acres for all other parts of New Zealand combined. During the four-year period from 1924 to 1928 the area in these fruits increased by 139 acres in the Auckland Province, whereas the increase for all other districts was only 12 acres.

Regarding the quantity of these fruits produced in New Zealand, it is estimated that during the year ended 31st March last the production for the Tauranga district alone was approximately 15,000 bushel cases of lemons and 1,500 bushel cases of oranges. When it is borne in mind that there are comparatively few citrus-orchards in New Zealand yet in full bearing, and that probably more than one-half of the orchards have not yet commenced to bear fruit, it will be seen that this young industry already counts for something. Further, the increased area being planted annually goes to show that considerable progress is being made in the culture of these fruits.

Persons contemplating the planting of citrus fruit-trees for commercial purposes would be well advised to go very thoroughly into the matter of suitable varieties and stocks, for varieties that have proved suitable for commercial planting in some parts may not give satisfaction in other parts. Information on these matters can always be obtained from the district Orchard Instructor, or from the Director of the Horticulture Division, Department of Agriculture, Wellington.

For those wishing to grow a few trees for domestic purposes I would suggest the following varieties as being suitable:—

Lemons: Lisbon, Genoa, and Eureka. For the colder parts of New Zealand the Meyer lemon is claimed to be most suitable, but it is not generally recommended for commercial planting at the present time.

Oranges: Ruby, Washington Navel, and Navalencia. For marmalade the Poorman orange is the best. There are probably more Poorman orange-trees grown in New Zealand than all other varieties together, and their fruit is rapidly coming into favour for dessert use.

Other citrus fruits, such as grapefruits, limes, mandarins, citrons, and shaddocks, will all thrive well in warm and sheltered locations in the North Island, and bear good crops of fruit. Citrus-trees, being