

fruit. Although damaged fruit should on no account be placed on the market, it need not necessarily be wasted and thus become a total loss to the grower; if sold privately for immediate use it can be utilized for making jam or preserves.

The degree of maturity at which the fruit should be gathered is a very vital question that can only be decided after taking into consideration the distance it must travel before reaching the point to which it is consigned. If immature when picked the fruit will not develop its full characteristic flavour, nor will it carry that bright fresh colour that lends to its attractiveness. On the other hand, if picked overripe the fruit quickly becomes mouldy and more or less rotten, and often reaches its destination with juice oozing from the container.

The correct degree of maturity for picking should be decided to a certain extent by the general appearance and feel of the fruit. A gradual change in colour takes place once the fruit has reached the ripening stage. Apricots, for instance, will gradually change in colour until they show a tinge of yellow over most of the fruit; peaches and nectarines will change to a golden yellow, or silvery yellow, according to the variety, while plums change to yellow or red according to the variety. The fruit should not be gathered before this change in colour takes place; at the same time care must be taken to see that it is gathered before it becomes soft, unless, of course, it is intended for immediate use. Cherries may be allowed to remain on the trees until fairly ripe. Undue handling destroys the bloom of the fruit and should be avoided as much as possible.

Budding.

Budding operations may be carried out in the following order: Cherries in December; apricots early January; plums, apples, and pears latter half of January; nectarines and peaches latter half of February and March. This is the only method and opportunity, as far as the current season is concerned, of reworking trees where grafts have failed, or working young stocks grown for the purpose.

Thinning and Cultivation.

If the natural dropping of fruit has ceased, thinning should be pushed on with all reasonable speed, as directed in last month's notes.

Cultivation should be continued as long as it is possible to do so without injuring the trees and fruit.

—*J. W. Whelan, Orchard Instructor, Palmerston North.*

Citrus Culture.

Every effort should be made to continue with cultivation work, especially as the spring has been such a moist one in most of the citrus areas, with a possibility of a dry spell to follow. With the lack of necessary cultivation the trees are bound to suffer through want of moisture, and where trees have blossomed heavily a large proportion of the flowers will fall without setting fruit.

A study should be made of individual trees, and where a heavy blossoming has taken place the trees should receive further assistance in the form of sulphate of ammonia or nitrate of soda. This could be applied at the rate of 2 lb. to 4 lb. per tree, according to its age and size, and if worked in would become immediately available.

In the case of young planted trees, these should be given every chance to develop; all superfluous shoots should be rubbed off, and any strong perpendicular shoots not required for the framework of the tree should be removed so as to encourage side growth, but where required for formation work they should be lightly tipped to ensure stability.