

Tying down the laterals is at times an operation requiring great care. If the laterals are stout they are extremely brittle, and are easily broken out of the spur. To bring such laterals safely down to the wire, hold the base of the lateral between finger and thumb of one hand and follow up the lateral with the finger and thumb of the other hand, giving a twist at each node sufficient to produce a crunching sound. After two or three twists the lateral can be bent down in safety. Where the trellis is a good distance from the roof tying down may be left till the base of the laterals becomes firm, as evidenced by a yellow appearance in the bark. The leaves must be kept clear of the glass, which may make it necessary to tie down a little at a time.

SUBLATERALS.

The treatment of sublaterals is a subject on which there is a wide divergence of opinion among experienced growers. In former times their extension was believed to be a necessity in promoting root-action. At the present time it is—and, indeed, has been for a number of years past—the practice of most commercial growers to suppress them altogether, breaking them out as soon as they show. It is held that if the vines grow strongly and make large leaves the sublaterals can be dispensed with. The advantage in doing this is a considerable saving of time, and in cases of close training it allows of a free passage of air among the leaves. An even spread of large leathery leaves is infinitely more valuable than any number of small and crowded leaves. One should be able to obtain an uninterrupted view between the foliage and the roof throughout the whole length of a fairly large house. If this condition obtains leaves will not be burned through pressing on the glass, and there will be no accumulation of moisture to cause burning and mildew, while the leaves, being exposed to light and suffering no injury, will be able to perform their normal functions properly.

SETTING AND THINNING OF THE BERRIES.

In this country there does not appear to be the difficulty in getting a good set of fruit that is experienced in the United Kingdom. No trouble of this kind has come under my notice except in cases where the vines had been badly treated or have been grown in a wet atmosphere. Varieties such as Lady Downe's and Muscat of Alexandria, reputed to be shy setters, have in my experience set quite freely. During the flowering-period the house should be kept rather dry—not entirely so, but "damping-down" should be moderate. Somewhere about midday vines of shy bearing tendency should be given a shake or jar just sufficient to cause a movement throughout the whole vine resulting in the dispersion of the pollen. The shaking should be repeated daily while the vines are flowering.

As soon as the berries are set they swell very rapidly. Surplus bunches should therefore be removed before the berries have swollen much, and should not be left for removal as thinning proceeds, as this would cause a waste of vitality. Varieties that are known to set freely may be thinned as soon as the blossoms fall, but shy setters should be left till the berries are the size of peas. The earlier thinning is done the easier it will be, and the better. If the berries crush each other before thinning is done the work is slow and difficult, and the berries will not afterwards attain full size.