

picked fruit will do, and such fruit frequently arrives on the market in an unsaleable condition. Pears should be disposed of before they become too yellow and ripe. All stored fruit should be repacked before it is placed on the market.

Pruning of Apples.

When planting a young apple-tree, of no matter what variety, always remove the centre-leader. Choose well-grown yearling or two-year old trees from a reliable nurseryman and see that they are free from all disease. The main stem should be short and not more than 18 in. high. Select three well-placed arms starting from different portions of the main stem at a wide angle if possible, and remove all others. Shorten the three arms back to three or four buds, pruning to side buds which will throw the shoots in the required direction, the object being to form a wide stout base of main arms upon which to build the future tree; these main arms jointing at different parts round the trunk give a very strong base. In the second year's pruning the trees are again pruned, about 9 in. to 1 ft. being left, and a well-placed fork being obtained by pruning to suitable side buds will give six leaders. Remove all but a few laterals from the inside of the tree, also thin out any excess of laterals on the outside of the limbs, and slightly shorten back those left.

In the third winter's pruning, prune fairly hard, leaving up to 18 in. on each leader, and cutting to a well-placed side bud on each, which will now give twelve leaders.

After the third year we have to consider future crops of fruit and vary the pruning practice so as to throw the tree into bearing. This must be done gradually, as the young tree must not be exhausted by being made to bear heavy crops, but should be gradually brought into full bearing as it approaches and reaches the age of eight or ten years, according to variety. The object is to maintain a strong, healthy, and vigorous low-set tree, capable of bearing regular and heavy crops of fruit from base upwards on the framework or leaders established, without any breaking-down of the limbs or stunting of the tree, this framework being so well spaced as to allow plenty of room between each leader, and the centre of the tree being kept as well open as the variety and climatic condition require, all the main and secondary arms being at an angle and not upright to the trunk. The fruiting wood or spurs should be built up gradually each year on all varieties of trees.

Sturmer and other varieties that spur freely are usually heavy croppers, but some of the laterals should be left long-pruned to make fresh fruiting-wood to take the place of the worn-out fruiting-spurs. The spurs so increase and multiply as the tree ages that it is necessary to thin them heavily, otherwise they rob each other, the flowers become weak and sterile, and the tree does not set its crop well. In addition to thinning out fruit-spurs and shortening some of the laterals, it is necessary to prune the leader-growth back to from 6 in. to 9 in. to enable the tree to make good sturdy lateral growth, otherwise it may become stunted.

Jonathan, Cox's Orange, and other varieties that fruit mainly on laterals and do not readily produce fruit-spurs require more skill in pruning than do the free spur-bearing varieties. It is very often necessary to prune these varieties to inside buds on the leader growth or to an upright lateral to prevent the trees from spreading too much. The laterals (and leaders) should be shortened only to good stout buds, as the two first are often blind. The leaders require to be kept well spaced and should not be allowed to overcrowd each other. As soon as the required number of leaders—*i.e.*, eight to twelve—have been obtained, they are not again forked or branched in pruning but are kept intact right through, the extremities being kept clean of all lateral growths so as to ensure a strong vigorous growth. This process is continued each year, and the laterals kept healthy, strong, and productive by shortening in after they form fruit-buds. Any laterals that have been left unpruned must be shortened in the following year, more