

In the Orchard and Vineyard

Orchard Notes

Spring Work in the Orchard

PRUNING operations in the orchard, if not completed, should be pushed ahead as speedily as possible in order that attention can be given to seasonal spraying operations. The gathering up and burning of all prunings not only clears the land ready for spring operations, but is a factor in the control of diseases.

Success in fruit-growing is obtainable only by strict attention to all details which will result in an increase in the production of best quality fruit on an economic basis and a reduction in production costs consistent with the production of that quality fruit. Proper pruning plays an important part, for not only will better crops of high quality fruit be produced, but the cost of maintenance of the orchard during the balance of the year will be considerably reduced.

Although the orchardist may feel that he cannot afford, in these times, to carry out all the known necessary operations, it will be found that the little extra expenditure involved is actually an asset rather than a liability. He should carefully consider such questions as the production of high quality fruit, an adequate spray schedule, proper methods of cultivation, suitable fertilisers, and adequate drainage.

Production Per Tree

Production per tree is important, and anything the orchardist can do to increase production is one step towards success, but the fruit produced must be of high quality. Generally speaking, the cost of production decreases as the production per tree increases. Therefore, any extra attention will result in added return to the producer.

Spray Schedules

The eradication of the numerous pests and diseases in the orchard demands constant attention throughout the season. Any relaxation may prove costly not only in the production of high quality fruit, but in the extra cost in the grading and packing of such fruit.

Spraying equipment should be in good order when starting operations, and attention should be paid to machinery, hose, nozzles, and all accessor-

ies. Because spraying is not the most pleasant of occupations, thoroughness is often sacrificed for speed, but it is a waste of time, material, and money to spray a tree and leave parts untouched, as they then act as breeding places for pests and diseases. Disease control depends not only on the strength of spray applied, but also on the complete coverage of all parts of the tree. Consequently, thoroughness of application cannot be stressed too strongly.

The times of application for the different sprays are obtainable from the Orchard Instructor for the district, and should be adhered to as closely as possible. One spray missed during the spring, or not applied at the proper time, cannot be remedied throughout the season.

Pests Encountered

The pests and diseases mostly concerned at this time are scale insects, principally San Jose, red mite, black-spot, and leaf-curl. For San Jose, a thorough application of red oil at the strength of 1 in 20 is recommended.

Care should be taken to see that there is no movement in the buds, otherwise damage might occur. Every effort should be made to control this pest, and complete coverage is essential.

Eggs of red mite, usually found in clusters round the bases of fruit spurs and joints of branches, will be destroyed by the application of a strong solution of red oil during the dormant period, thus reducing the chances of infection during the early part of the growing season, when all the energy of the young foliage is required in the production of high quality fruit.

The question of the use of Bordeaux mixture or lime sulphur as a base or foundation spray for the control of fungus diseases exercises the mind of growers, but much depends on the particular disease they wish to control. Although lime sulphur has been claimed to be the best spray for powdery mildew, there appears to be no great evidence to support that view, for good results have been obtained by the use of Bordeaux mixture, and, as it is recognised as the better fungicide, due consideration should be given to it as a

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