

FACTORS INFLUENCING QUALITY OF PIP FRUIT



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo.]

Cases lightly filled with fruit at this stage to avoid damage which occurs if they are over-filled.

in January (February in Otago), during the hottest period of the summer, this variety requires very speedy handling and dispatch. These pears should be picked and packed and reach an assembly depot within 24 hours.

Bruising during Picking

Instances have been quoted of record tallies in picking, some of which are double and treble the normal picking rates. Nothing is gained in setting such records if a large percentage of fruit is bruised and punctured. In fact such picking often results in a considerable loss to the grower. Steady picking, with the elimination of bruising, should be the grower's objective in training his staff.

Apples should not be pulled or plucked but picked with a backward rolling movement which parts the stem from the spur at the abscission ring. Fruit which is plucked or pulled often has the spur attached, which, if placed in a picking bag, punctures or bruises any fruit with which it comes in contact. Sometimes the stem may be torn from the apple, leaving an open wound, which, apart from providing an entry for fungi, detracts from the value of the fruit. Immature fruit is difficult to pick, as Nature has not intended the stem to part from the spur at this stage. Furthermore, when a spur is torn from a tree the bud which will produce fruit in the next season is also removed.

Apples should be placed, not dropped, into the picking receptacle, whether it is a bag, bucket, basket, or box. The method of emptying the picking bag or apron is important, as bruising may be caused by pouring apples into a container. The picker should place the picking bag in the container, release the canvas bottom, and then slowly straighten up, drawing the bag from the fruit. Be sure the case is not over-filled, otherwise

bruising will occur when cases are stacked.

Stacking

When fruit is to remain stacked in the orchard for a short period it is important to level the ground to provide a good foundation for the stack. This will save loss of time and fruit which would occur if a stack capsized.

If it is intended to leave the stack out for some days, protection should be provided against the possibility of wet weather. After levelling the ground, sacks or old bags can be placed on it to keep cases clean. Three

cases can be placed on one sack, and if stacked 6 tiers high, 100 sacks will enable 1800 cases to be stacked without the risk of the bottom row becoming coated with mud. Timber, straw, or cover crop also can be used to protect the bottom cases. Top cases require covering to prevent the fruit which is exposed from bleaching in the sun. The handiest and quickest method of covering is to place inverted cases on the stacks. In exposed situations, however, where wind is likely, the best method is one in which three lid pieces can be used effectively, the centre one overlapping the other



[National Publicity Studios photo.]

A case packed to the correct height is shown in the illustration. Severe damage may occur to fruit on the lidding press unless the pack is crowned correctly.