

## GARDENING NOTES

(By Mr. J. Joyce, Landscape Gardener, Christchurch.)

### SUMMER PRUNING.

Now is the time to have a look over the fruit trees, and cut away all superfluous growth, which is not necessary for the maturing of this season's crop nor for that of next season. This growth consists of young shoots, commonly known as laterals. All this wood wants to be cut away, so as to leave sun, light, and air to develop the crop, and give it a chance to ripen in its proper season. Trees that are annually pruned usually make a large quantity of this lateral growth, and those need summer pruning more so than those which are not so pruned. When trees of this nature are left to their own free will, there is usually such a mass of growth in the centre that it makes a shelter for all the blights that the tree is subject to. When this is cut away the sun and air can penetrate the tree all round, and the consequence is a finer crop of fruit—better colored and well ripened. Summer pruning is a most necessary operation. It preserves the health and beauty of the tree, and gives it a chance to produce a well-grown crop, and the wood to ripen for the next season.

Apples and pears produce their fruit on the old wood and on spurs, and on this account the lateral shoots must be cut in to spurs—that is leaving about three or four eyes on the shoot, which is to be pruned to about one or two eyes in the winter. It is not wise to cut too close at the summer operation, as the spurs sometimes throw out fresh shoots, especially if they are pruned early. If they are cut back to one or two eyes in summer, the eyes which should become bearing buds would very likely throw out shoots instead, and on that account summer pruned trees should be left with long spurs to be reduced in the winter. It is always advisable to leave the leaders of each branch untouched until winter, when they can be cut back to the required length. Those leaders carry the sap, and distribute it evenly over the tree. There is usually at this time a good deal of woolly aphid or American blight, on the branches of the apple trees, and, if time permits, a brushing over with a hard palm brush, using a little kerosene emulsion, or red oil, will destroy it for the time being. There is no use trying to eradicate it completely, as it is, like the weeds of the garden, always there.

The pear is of the same nature as the apple, so that the treatment recommended for the latter will suit the former. The pear is not subject to the American blight, but it has another pest which attacks the leaves, and, if not checked, will completely destroy all the leaves to the detriment of the next year's crop, as when the leaves are destroyed early in the season, nature causes the tree to burst into new foliage, which was stored up in the buds for the following season's operations. The tree having grown two crops of leaves in one season, this effort naturally weakens its constitution. Moreover, it has to use its energy to form fresh buds for the maintenance of the tree for the following year. The consequence is that the routine work of the tree is interfered with, and it is so weakened from this fight against unnatural treatment, that it is not capable of producing a normal crop of fruit the following season. The cause of all this trouble is a little glossy looking fly, which lays its eggs on the leaves and hatches out into little objects like leeches, and fastens itself to the leaves, which it devours if left unchecked. It also attacks the cherry, mountain ash, hawthorn, and other trees, and makes them look very unsightly. It usually appears about December and January, so that a close watch must be kept out for it, and when it is noticed the trees must be sprayed with hellebore. This hellebore can be purchased from any seedsman. A couple of handfuls put into a good bucket of water and well stirred until it is dissolved, and then left to settle for some time before being used, will clear the trees of the pest. Spraying may have to be done two or three times before it is completely

eradicated. As a rule plums and cherries do not require summer pruning as they are best left until the winter, unless there are any shoots growing out of place which may want removing.

The peach will stand a good deal of summer pruning. It produces its crop of fruit on the last season's wood, so that care must be taken to leave a sufficient quantity of young wood to produce a crop the following year. Trees which are trained to walls and fences, will need a lot of cutting. All the young wood growing out of place must be cut away, leaving only the shoots to furnish the next season's crop, and if there is too much fruit on the tree it ought to be thinned, as this will help to make that which is left larger and better flavored. A bucket of liquid manure occasionally would greatly benefit a tree bearing a full crop.

The nectarine being of the same species, the treatment of the peach answers its requirements, and the same may be said of the apricot.

Red currant trees make a lot of wood, and this is best cut back and thinned out, for if left on, they grow too luxuriantly, especially young trees, so that the shoots break away and spoil the shape of the trees. Red currants stand cutting well back this time of the year. They bear on spurs and old wood, so that the most of the young stuff can be disposed of, leaving sufficient to keep the tree going.

Black currants require very little attention at this season, as a little thinning out in the winter will be sufficient. Now that all the fruit is picked off raspberries, the old wood ought to be cut out, carted away, and burned, as very often it harbors a grub which may get on to the young canes, and interfere with the next season's crop. Also, all the young shoots which are not needed are better removed, leaving about five or six good strong canes.

Vines growing on trellises and walls should also be seen to. If any young shoots are straggling about, they should be cut away, and if any are needed to fill in vacant spaces they ought to be nailed up in their proper positions. If any mildew is noticed, shake plenty of sulphur on the bunches and leaves. The sulphur will not injure the grapes, nor will it hurt the user. By dipping the bunch in clean water it will come off without any injury to the fruit.

It is well to cut away all runners from strawberry plants unless some are wanted to make new beds, and then sufficient strong ones can be left. It is a mistake to leave all the runners on, as they exhaust the parent plant. When making a strawberry bed care should be taken to procure plants from fruit-bearing stocks, as there are many plants which are non-producers. The strongest plants should be selected, and those which grow nearest to the parent plant, being the first runners developed, naturally are the strongest. March or April is the best time to plant young strawberries. The usual time given to a bed of strawberries to be productive is about three years, when a fresh bed should be ready. That means planting a bed every two years.

### Hunterville

The Catholics of the district met (says the *Hunterville Express*) on Monday evening, January 18, in the Argyle Hall for the purpose of entertaining Miss Grey prior to her approaching marriage. Several of the clergy were present, and during the course of the evening Father Doolaghty expressed the thanks of the Catholics of the parish to Miss Grey for her valued services to the Church. For years she had acted as organist, and it was entirely due to her that they had a choir to assist in the services. He wished her, on behalf of the congregation, every happiness in her married life, and asked her acceptance of a handsome Morris chair as a gift from her church friends. Mr. Grey returned thanks for the gift to his daughter. They both felt honored at the warm feeling that prompted it. Songs and recitations helped to pass a pleasant evening, and before dispersing supper was handed round.