

INTRODUCTORY.

Cranberry Booklet—In view of many inquiries from all sections of the country, it has been deemed advisable to issue in a convenient and cheap form a compendium of main features anent cranberry culture, merchandizing, cookery, etc., which receiving the endorsement of the leading members of the Wisconsin State Cranberry Grower's Association, et al., would be acceptable as authoritative. Copies can be procured by application to Secretary's office; price ten (10c) cents [stamps accepted].

By order of Committee on Printing and Publishing.

W. H. FITCH, Secretary

CRANBERRY CULTURE.

[From Wisconsin Valley Leader, Jan. 8, '03.]

In response to several inquiries on the growth and culture of cranberries the following, by W. H. Fitch, secretary of the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers' Association, as furnished to the Farmers Sentinel, is timely:

It is a singular fact that notwithstanding the length of time the cranberry has been among us there are comparatively

few people who have a knowledge concerning its cultivation and growth. Almost every other fruit is better known and at the present time, when every industry is being illustrated and explained, when horticulture is becoming a feature in our State, it may not be amiss to say something of the methods now used to bring the berry from its wild state to its present perfection.

The alluvial formation, or peat bog, is the natural home of the cranberry. In

Wisconsin this alluvial district is called the cranberry belt, and in this district the growing of the wild cranberry has followed the trend of every other industry and improved upon itself. The first cultivated cranberry bog was made in New Jersey as early as 1849, at Cassvill, hence to New Jersey and to John Webb is due the credit of the first planted cranberry marsh. Mr. Webb and his wife used to gather the wild berries, like many of his neighbors, and carry them to town to trade, and it was while gathering them that his intelligence and observation opened the way to fortune, not alone for him, but for many others. He noticed that wherever the sand had washed from the edges of the swamp by freshets or spring rains and settled around the roots of the cranberry vines the fruit was large and yielded more abundantly, so with a spade and wheelbarrow he set to work spreading sand all over the bog, and planting more vines in thin places; he was aided by his wife and by his wooden leg. With the end of his wooden leg he used to punch a hole in the wet sand. His wife would then set a vine in the hole and press it firmly with her foot. Their work brought great success and also a saying that it "took a man with a wife and a wooden leg to raise cranberries."

HOW CRANBERRIES ARE GROWN

Up to the present time New Jersey has

furnished a third of the crop of the United States. The *modus operandi* is not so simple now as it was to the Webbs, but greater perfection is reached. The berries we have in the market this season were grown on vines planted at least three years ago. It takes a vine three years to come into full bearing, each year the yield increasing if proper conditions are kept up. The greatest part of the work is done the first year. The marsh is cleared of all wild growth. Many take off a thin top layer of soil, grass roots and weeds with a scalping plow, the sharp blade of the plow being adjusted to cut under the soil, which is then removed in blocks and piled to form walls, or dams, around the sections, leaving a perfectly level surface, on which the vines are planted. This work is done by men working in pairs, one scattering the vines thickly over the surface, the other with an implement called a spud pressing them into the soil. Every part of the vine thus pressed into the soil and covered takes root and makes new growth. Often if there is a scarcity of sand on the surface of the marsh it is carted and spread lightly over the vines. Ditches are cut dividing the land into small sections. It is desirable at all times to keep a certain depth of water in these ditches—they are not deep—and the dams on the outside edge confine the water, thus insuring

the necessary amount of moisture for the vines. After the first year the ditches are forced to overflow the sections covering them with water, which, freezing, protects the vines from the variable temperature of the winter. The flooding of the vines is done about the middle of November. The canals and ditches are kept supplied with water from reservoirs located above the marshes, and the flow of water is controlled by sluice gates or flumes that can be closed or opened as required. Although fine and dainty the cranberry vine is a sturdy little plant, notwithstanding a very low temperature, but the alternate freezing and thawing of the winter is fatal to the tiny fruit bud of the coming season, so they must be well protected.

HOW THE PLANT BLOSSOMS AND FRUITS.

When spring has fairly opened the water is drained low off the marshes, giving the ground a chance to warm up and the vines to grow and harden in the sunshine. As the season advances the main plant throws out tiny stems from the small butt at the end of its stalk; the stems are called hooks, and they in turn throw out the stems which bear the fruit. Late in June the buds burst into bloom minute white and pink blossoms, so close and thick that they resemble a fall of snow. Six or eight weeks from the

blossoming the berry is ready to pick. The vine seldom grows higher than six or eight inches, but runs along the ground, striking roots and new shoots all around the parent stem.

New marshes are generally prepared in the fall and planting done in the spring. Wisconsin is making rapid strides to the front in the extent and productiveness of its bogs and stands at the head for keeping quality of its fruit. It is more in the direction of an improved quality of fruit that Wisconsin cranberry growers are now giving their attention.

To those contemplating engaging in cranberry culture the first and best advice would be attendance at the State Growers' meetings, held, respectively, on the second Tuesday of January and first Tuesday after Aug. 12th of each year. At these meetings conferences can be had with leading operators and up-to-date addresses heard and discussed. A visit also to the State Experimental Station, situated between Cranmoor and Elm Lake, is recommended. Here over 100 varieties of vines are being tested and propagated and different methods of cultivation and implements used can be seen. In the reports of the meetings and other publications of the association will be found the latest information containing results of experience or suggestions bear-

ing on the welfare of the business.

THE COST OF PLANTING AN ACRE.

Owing to the peculiar and somewhat precarious nature of cranberry growing, it is difficult if not well-nigh impossible to give specific directions for raising the same, but though the obstacles are not insuperable a marked degree of intelligence, integrity, intrepidity and industry is required to court success. There are certain general requisites considered indispensable, namely an ample water supply and good, quick drainage, the former a need or necessity for protection from unseasonable frosts and the latter that warmth may be conserved for growth and maturity. Either alone would not suffice, and the bulk of failures in the business may be traced herein—a studious and scientific inquiry into these two factors will preclude and prevent much disappointment. When the vegetation is very foul, removing the surface is advised, otherwise mowing and heavily sanding is deemed better. Of the different methods of planting that in rows of three inches and one foot apart is most generally favored, although spreading is

also practiced. As to varieties, that is largely a matter of taste or opinion, but only the best are advocated. At present the leaders are Berlin Bell and Bugle, Jumbo, Metallic Bell, Howe, McFarlin and others having more or less local reputation. Prices for these varieties range from \$50 to \$400 a ton and a good setting requires nearly a half a ton to the acre. The cost for setting an acre in good shape will range from \$150 to \$750, according to conditions of land and surroundings.

The commercial side of the avocation does not differ much from other pursuits. It has its seamy as well as its smooth side, but under favorable conditions it is believed an acre of well protected, solidly planted, choice vines will pay on an investment of \$500. To attain such a status, however, will require from five to seven years of patient toil and expense—but given such treatment reasonable remunerative results, reward and repayment will follow the careful and conscientiously grown, gathered and graded Wisconsin cranberry. W. H. FITCH.

Cranmoor, Wis.

SOME CRANBERRY STATISTICS.

Below is appended a table compiled from the census report showing the production of cranberries in the United States as reported by growers for the year 1899, While the tale is undoubtedly incomplete, it is valuable as showing the comparative production, acreage, number of growers, etc., in the different states, assuming that