

Champion, the great brag berry, is a great grower but when it comes to fruit it is disappointing in yield, flavor, size, etc., so many imperfect berries while Fremont Williams by its side is even later and twice as productive. It is just as vigorous a grower and all the berries average large, firm and smooth. With me it is the most productive late variety I have tried except it might be July. I have not tested it enough yet to know but I think it will even surpass Fremont Williams.

Virginia sold or introduced for extra early was disappointing in every respect.

Chesapeake Late was a complete failure. Highland will be a wonder if it does as well another year as this year as it more than bears out the introducer's claim.

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## DOES INSPECTION OF SMALL FRUIT PAY THE GROWER.

By E. F. BABCOCK, Sparta.

The title of this paper "Does inspection of small fruit pay the grower" naturally suggests another and a greater question, "Does an association of growers and shippers benefit the grower" for as a matter of fact inspection and grading are simply necessary adjuncts to the machinery of a successful association.

The Inspector acts as an equalizer in fixing the grade and comparative value of the product of the grower and making it possible to bring the entire crop of any particular section under one management and thus relieve the grower of the labor and responsibility of marketing his product at a time when he is much needed at home.

It must always be kept in mind that small fruit is highly perishable and on its maturity must be moved with rapidity and despatch. Inspection makes it possible for the manager of an association to distribute his product to much better advantage than would be possible had it not been examined and its grade and shipping qualities determined, as some of it may be more firm and can be shipped a long distance with safety while the balance can be distributed to points nearer home to good advantage, even when all are of the same grade. This

system of intelligent distribution is one of the secrets of the great success of the Sparta Fruit Growers' Ass'n.

The buyer is also benefited by inspection, for under this system he is assured that stock will be selected each day that is best adapted to his use; if he be located a long distance from the point of shipment he knows that only the firmest stock will be consigned to him or if he be located near by he knows that he will get just what he desires, stock ready for home consumption.

Another benefit to the grower is the record of the Inspector of the quality of his product which may be very valuable in the pressing of damage claims, as his stock has been examined and its grade and shipping quality determined by a disinterested expert at the primary shipping point and the grower therefor is not handicapped by the fact that he only knew the condition of the stock when it was delivered to the carrying company.

The Inspector also acts as an instructor to the grower, and this has probably been the greatest benefit of all to the growers at Sparta, for as they deliver their product each day at the grading platform the Inspector is constantly looking for and pointing out defects in picking, packing or delivering and illustrating by comparison where they have failed and if possible suggesting a remedy. I have noticed that more than one-half of the low-grade stock was due either to the carelessness or the ignorance of the grower. These lessons have had their effect and today the general appearance of the stock brought to the Association has improved 100% and slack filled boxes, over-ripe fruit, or stock delivered in a mussy condition from rough handling is a rare exception.

That the retailer appreciates the advantages I have set before you is demonstrated by the fact that in the past four years the order business of our Association has increased by leaps and bounds and the past season it taxed its officers to the utmost to care for it. The reason is very plain, the buyer, whether he be a retailer or a car-lot distributor, is no longer forced to trust to the judgment of the grower, who for all he knows may be inexperienced in shipping or whose ideas of what constitutes good shipping stock may be entirely at variance with his. As it is, the buyer trusts the inspector who acts as a third party and whose duty it is to keep his grades up to a standard that will command the confidence of the trade.

In this way the buyer's risk has been reduced to a minimum

and he is willing to pay more for inspected stock than he would pay on the street direct to the grower. These are some of the advantages the grower receives by the system of inspection which has been a great benefit to the growers of Sparta, for under it the association has not only been able to obtain for them a greater net profit than ever before but has taken from them a great part of the labor and worry in the marketing of their produce. At the same time the association has constructed and now occupies a new \$10,000 building thoroughly equipped for its needs and not only have the officers the fullest confidence\*of the members but of the trade wherever its product is offered for sale. Successful as inspection at Sparta has proven itself to be, the officers of the association do not feel that they have yet done all possible but are seriously considering the wisdom of instituting what is known as field inspection which will give the Inspector a greater opportunity to examine the stock and instruct the growers in the picking and packing of his product.

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Mr. C. L. Richardson: Will Mr. Babcock tell us of what this inspection consists?

Mr. Babcock: It consists of examining stock as it is delivered, and grading it, separating it. We make at Sparta four distinct grades.

Mr. Daub: Have you ever tried field inspection?

Mr. Babcock: Of course inspection as we have practiced it at Sparta has been practiced entirely on the grading plan, but field inspection is an undeveloped quantity as yet. People think it is a good thing and I think that it is coming if not this season, it is sure to come sooner or later.

Mr. Richardson: If a fruit grower comes in with a load of berries, what do you do, do you rip off the covers to inspect the fruit, or what do you do, exactly?

Mr. Babcock: Not without I suspect something. When a grower delivers a load of berries at the platform, I make it a point to take out perhaps the second crate, then perhaps I will let three or four go on, pass them by, then take another crate out, split the cover, examine it, perhaps raise the top of the box and look in, and if I suspect anything, even go so far as to dump the box of berries. Of course my experience in inspect-

ing small fruits has been confined entirely to Sparta, that being the place where I was born and brought up; I know my men.

Mr. Hanchett: The field inspection would be largely for the purpose of instructing growers, helping them in grading, and also in detecting those who are not packing in the right way.

Mr. Babcock: Yes, and it gives the inspector an idea of what that man has, he can see it on the vines and if he knows his business he can tell how that stock will look in the crate before he commences to pick.

Mr. Hanchett: While you are on this subject of inspection, it might be of interest to the strawberry growers here to know what inspection means in the Hood River district. I had the privilege of interviewing some officers of the Hood River Strawberry Growers' Association this fall and I found there the berries were all repacked when they were brought in from the field; they had a force of packers who repacked each box. The berries were emptied out, any overripe berries were thrown out and the fruit repacked in the boxes. It is highly important that no overripe stock goes in, where they travel so far to the market, and of course the freight charges are so high that it does not pay to put any inferior stock on the market, and their inspector holds every box of berries and sees that they are repacked. Whether or not we shall ever get to that here in Wisconsin is a question. If we ever have to reach out to markets as distant as the Hood River growers do, we certainly would be compelled to resort to that kind of inspection. I have no doubt they will be doing that at Bayfield before long.

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#### SMALL FRUITS—PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT.

O. M. TAYLOR, Geneva, N. Y.

A discussion of Small Fruits will not be complete if centered about lists of varieties, distance of planting, cultural treatment, or enemies to be held in check. These subjects are important and some knowledge in regard to them is essential. Yet this information should be combined with a broader knowledge which takes in principles relating to soils and to plants. Back of all this is the human equation—the man—who more than anything else is the controlling factor.