

TRANSACTIONS

TO THE

Wisconsin State Horticultural Society

WINTER MEETING.

Annual Convention, Madison, Jan. 18-20, 1910.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 18.

SMALL FRUIT SESSION.

The meeting was called to order at 2 p. m. Following the invocation by Irving Smith President Toole called on Mr. Richardson for:

REPORT FROM THE SPARTA DISTRICT FOR THE SEASON OF 1909.

E. A. RICHARDSON, Mngr., Sparta Fruit Growers Assn.

The season of 1909 had some surprises, also some disappointments for the Small Fruit Growers in the Sparta District. The healthy condition of Strawberry plants when spring opened, and the vigorous growth which they made as the spring advanced, led us to believe that we might expect a fairly good crop. Although the plants were somewhat thin in the row, they were almost entirely free from black root which has been so prevalent for the last few years.

As the fruiting season came on we were somewhat disappointed to find that a great number of plants had no fruit stems, and that many put forth only one small stem with but very few berries.

In looking for a cause for these conditions, we came to the conclusion that owing to the late dry season of 1908, the plants did not mature enough to form fruit buds for the crop of 1909, as many of them had but one or two small roots to commence business when spring opened.

Owing to the healthy condition of the plants, our spring setting made a very vigorous growth, and now think that we have the best stand of plants we have had for the past three or four years. All rows in our fruiting beds being full, and as a general thing not too many plants to insure a good quality of fruit and of fair size where the ground is in a good state of fertility.

The Marlboro Red Raspberry, which has been the standby of the Raspberry growers in the past, and which for the last four or five years has been almost a total failure, surprised us very much in the new canes which it put forth, even in the older yards it bids fair to put forth a good crop the coming season. But the attention of the growers have turned to the Cuthbert and early King which of late have made a good growth of cane, and appear to be the money makers, notwithstanding that the Cuthbert comes in so late that we are not able to get as good an average for the full crop as we did for the earlier varieties.

The Black Raspberry most grown for market at the present time is the Plum Farmer. This is an early berry, about the size of the Gregg but not quit as productive. The fact that it is an early berry, (about 10 days earlier than the Gregg) makes it very popular with our growers, as they have learned that it is the early fruit that brings the best prices.

Of the Blackberry, we have the Ancient Briton, Snyder, and Eldorado, growing in our section; and would say that the Eldorado is now being set to the exclusion of all others. This is an earlier berry than the Ancient Briton, coming on the market about with the Snyder, a much better berry as to flavor and carrying qualities, and more productive than the Snyder, but think that the Ancient Briton will yield more quarts per acre, although the Eldorado, coming as early as it does will give better returns in dollars and cents than either of the other two.

I am unable to give you any information about the Perfection currant as there are but very few currants and Gooseberries grown for market in the Sparta District.

Grapes were a very light crop, none being shipped from our station.

There appears to be a revival in the interest of horticulture, especially in the planting of the apple orchards. And as to the small fruits, we are expecting the largest shipments the coming season that have ever been forwarded from our district. The shipments by the Sparta Fruit Growers Ass'n, for 1909, amounted to about \$60,000 this we expect to nearly double in 1910.

A Member: How about the New Eaton raspberry?

Mr. Richardson: It is not a berry that we care to recommend.

Dr. Loope: I would like to ask in regard to your gooseberries, what do they sell at?

Mr. Richardson: I think our gooseberries this year averaged \$1.50 a crate. There is a market for a limited quantity of gooseberries, but a large quantity I do not think would find a ready sale, although I think the use of the gooseberry is growing every year. I would say in regard to the raspberry, around Sparta we are setting out a great many of the King for an early berry; it comes in earlier than the Cuthbert and it seems to be a firm shipper, and I think will be a better market berry for us than the Cuthbert, for the reason that the Cuthbert runs along until we are out of pickers, and it seems to be impossible to get pickers for the Cuthbert.

A Member: Can you tell us anything about the Plum Farmer?

Mr. Richardson: The Plum Farmer is being grown quite extensively with us as a black cap, it is about the size of the Gregg, coming in early, and consequently giving us an early market berry. In connection with this I would say that a good portion of our black raspberries, about sixteen hundred 24-pint cases, were Plum Farmer this year, and those averaged \$2.25 a crate of 24 pints.

A Member: I would like to ask as to the limit of the market for currants?

Mr. Richardson: I think the market is unlimited for any

article, it depends on the price you want to get out of it. With us, currants this year averaged \$1.37 a crate, but that is more than we can expect to get out of a crop of currants, an extensive crop. I should think one dollar a crate would be a good price.

Mr. Bingham: I would like to ask Mr. Richardson what the strawberries netted the growers this year at Sparta?

Mr. Richardson: We had nearly 30,000 cases for which we paid the growers \$1.21 and a fraction of a cent a case.

Mr. A. J. Smith: I would like to hear a little more about the New Eaton raspberry. I have grown it a couple of years, and this year I had a full crop of it, and I found it the best raspberry I ever saw. It started fruiting earlier and it lasted longer than other kinds, and I did not find, as Mr. Richardson stated, that you could not pull the fruit off the bush easily; I found it just the same as any other variety, and all of my neighbors put the Eaton raspberry down as the best raspberry they ever saw. I exhibited it a good many times.

Mr. Hanchett: The Eaton Raspberry as we have it at Sparta is not a raspberry that we can recommend anybody to plant for the market. We find the Eaton will not pick readily, and this for the market we find an important point.

Mr. Coe: The difference that we find here, I take it, is the difference between a grower for home use and a grower for the market. My friend Smith here can oversee the picking of his raspberries and have them for the table in fine condition, have no trouble in harvesting them, but if you pick them a little bit early, before they are really ripe, I think they are hard to pick.

Mr. Geo. Kellogg: I would like to get a little more information on the Perfection Currant; some of us are interested in this new currant; we would like to know of some one who has grown it in our latitude to say something either for or against it.

Mr. Smith: I have grown it for years; I consider it the best currant that there is on the market. A year ago last summer the leaves dropped from other kinds, while the Perfection currant was as green as grass, bunches of currants almost like small bunches of grapes. I think it is the best currant I ever saw.