

KENTUCKY FRUIT NOTES

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WHAT VARIETY WILL YOU PLANT?

The Horticultural Department of the Kentucky Experiment Station is conducting extensive variety trials at Lexington and Princeton, with apples, peaches, strawberries, grapes and, to a less extent, with plums, pears, raspberries, and blackberries. The results of these trials are for the information of Kentuckians who are in need of this material and will be gladly furnished on request. If the results of these trials are used or consulted by those planning to set fruit trees, vines, or berry plants, much time and money can be saved.

Many nurseries give such glowing descriptions of any and all varieties that their catalogs are of little real help in selecting varieties to plant. Many varieties are not suitable for planting in Kentucky and some are failures, generally. Also, remember that over-sized trees transplant with difficulty and few survive, and that most commercial orchardists prefer young, medium-sized trees.

STRAWBERRY MULCH

Cooperative mulching tests made with commercial strawberry growers and started in 1938 indicate that 3 out of 4 years fall mulching of strawberries will pay a handsome profit over spring mulching. For the 9-year period, fall mulching has produced an average of 30 crates per acre more than spring mulching. The greatest increase was 80 crates per acre, in the spring of 1940, following a period when temperatures went to 10° and 12° below zero with no snow on the ground. As a result of that cold period, many non-mulched plants were killed or the crown and roots were so badly injured that very low production resulted. In February and early March of 1947 the

near-zero temperatures resulted in much crown and root injury to non-mulched strawberries over the entire state.

SUGGESTIONS: In order to prevent infesting the fields with rye, wheat, or cheat, it is suggested that the baled straw be taken to the patch in October or early November and the wires clipped so that the straw will soak up the fall rains and germinate any grain before spreading. This straw is then ready to spread in late November or early December when it seems that the temperature will go down to 15° to 20°. These dates vary and may be later in southern Kentucky and earlier in the northern portion. One and one half tons of straw per acre seem about right for the Purchase Area, with about 2 tons around Henderson, Greenville, and Bowling Green, and from 2 to 2½ tons per acre around Louisville and Covington.

ORCHARD MICE PLENTIFUL

Most Kentucky orchardists are familiar with orchard mice and the damage they can cause to fruit plantings. Those who are not familiar with these pests would do well to study the habits and customs of these mice. Even experienced orchardists often become careless and fail to take proper precautions to prevent serious injury to some of their valuable trees. Such was the experience of an excellent grower near Henderson during the winter of 1945-'46. An early January examination revealed that mice had girdled or seriously injured about 100 apple trees 3 to 5 years old. Applications of both zinc phosphide on apple cubes and poison grain strychnine bait quickly stopped further injury but it did not, of course, repair the damage done to the trees.

A recent examination of a large apple orchard near Paducah show-