

FRUIT TREES FOR VILLA GARDENS.

I.—THE APPLE.

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IN my "Orchardist" the lists of hardy fruits are so long, and the directions for planting, training, pruning, etc., etc., so various, that the owner of a small garden may confess without shame that he would be glad of some briefer and simpler advice on the production of useful fruits. In my own behalf, I must say that my book includes every detail of fruit production, and therefore the owner of a small garden is as fully provided for as the owner of a great domain, or the speculator who intends to grow fruit on a large scale for market. It should, however, be in my power to contribute to the FLORAL WORLD an article calculated to promote the production of fruit in the villa garden, and I begin with the apple, because it is indispensable and is the easiest of all fruits to grow. That we do not grow enough, is evident by our imports of apples from America and the continent of Europe; that we might grow all we want, and even spare some for export, any one will believe who has seen my plantations, or who has in the season made notes in any good private garden where the apple has had justice done it. As a rule, this hardy, useful, and elegant fruit is most unjustly treated, and takes revenge on its owner by becoming sterile, cankered, defiled with American blight, or clothed with injurious lichen. The best preventative for these is high cultivation.

It may appear to some readers that this is a bad time to advise on the subject; but I think it the best time, for those who contemplate planting next autumn have the summer before them for getting the land ready for early planting: or to put the case another way, they are in a position, as regards time, to do the thing properly, and the success of a plantation of fruit trees depends very much indeed on the way in which the first step was taken. Now, I shall suppose you have a piece of grass land on which you intend to plant apples. It is time to begin *now*, and my way of beginning would be to trench the ground two spits deep, and take off a crop of potatoes. A good sound loam would do this well and be ready for the apple trees in October, but a poor soil would require to be aided with a good coat of manure, laid between the top and bottom spit as the work went on, the grass spit being of course put at the bottom of the trenches. I would order my trees in September at latest, and I would plant in October, remembering what our editor has told us, that trees planted in autumn grow without asking, but trees planted in spring want persuading and coaxing.

As to the selection of trees, I should for myself prefer bush or pyramid trees, grafted on the proper Paradise Stock; but if I wanted a few large trees for embellishing a grass enclosure, or to improve a shrubbery border, Standards on the Crab Stock would be preferable.

There are several bad stocks in use in nurseries, and the sorts grafted on them rarely do justice to their names. The true Paradise is the proper thing; it is sufficiently vigorous, it makes a great lot of surface roots, and promotes a short, hard growth of wood, and abundant fruitfulness. Having years ago secured the real Paradise stock, I have taken care to employ it for pyramid and bush apples exclusively, and the result is that I have grafted and sold hundreds of thousands of apple trees adapted for miniature orchards. As to the selection of sorts, my advice to the villa gardener is to give the preference to long-keeping sorts of first-class quality. Selected lists of such will, from time to time, be given in the FLORAL WORLD. It is an easy matter to keep a store of apples, and after the turn of the new year they begin to be valuable. Of course, a few early sorts should be included in a selection, but we can always buy apples in autumn pretty cheap, and the wise planter will therefore take particular care to plant sorts that are noted for long keeping.

There are three forms of apple trees adapted for villa gardens beside the Standard, of which, on the present occasion, I do not intend to speak. Of these three forms, I cannot do better than repeat in part, what I have said elsewhere, to put the case before the reader concisely.

ESPALIERS on Crab Stocks is an old mode of training, used to separate the walks and borders from the other portions of the garden; when neatly executed, this mode is both useful and ornamental, and for heavy fruits is better than either Standards or Pyramids, as the fruit is not so easily blown from the trees. The mode of forming them is, to procure a young tree, with three or five branches, taking care to get a tree with the central shoot the strongest; the side-shoots are to be trained in their full length, and if more than one pair, they ought to be trained from nine to twelve inches apart, and horizontally; the side-branches are to be treated exactly as if each were a single cordon, and the central shoot cut down to fifteen inches, so as to make it break either three or five of its eyes—the former if it is weak, the latter if strong. This must be annually repeated until the trees have attained the necessary height—five or six feet.

PYRAMIDS, on various stocks, are all formed pretty much the same way. I shall, therefore, only treat of them upon the Paradise Stock, which has a wonderful power of dwarfing the trees grafted upon it. Of stocks called Paradise there are several kinds—the true or Scott's *Pommier de Paradis*, the *Doucain*, the *Burr Knott*, and the *Stibbert*. I have trees growing upon all these kinds of stocks, but all, excepting the true *Paradise*, are unfit for a real *Miniature Orchard*. Scott's *Pommier de Paradis* is really wonderful in its dwarfing character; trees worked upon it, not more than twelve to eighteen inches high, bear fine crops. The fruit is generally larger than off the other stocks, with a peculiar aroma, somewhat like the fruit of the *Pommier de Paradis* itself.

An orchard planted with trees upon this stock is exceedingly interesting, and may at first be planted eighteen inches apart: at this distance they may be grown for five or six years, after which

each alternate tree may be removed and replanted, thus making the original plantation twice its former size; they will then stand at three feet apart. The same operation may be repeated in ten or twelve years, when the original plantation will be increased to four times its former size, having the trees six feet apart—that is, if one-fourth of an acre was commenced with, it would take one acre to contain all the trees after ten or twelve years.

DWARF BUSH formed trees, either on the surface-rooting Crabs, *Doucin*, or *Pommier de Paradis*, are easily formed, and for small gardens are much to be preferred to any other form, as they are easily managed, bear abundantly, and the fruit are not subject to be blown down by storms. The trees may be planted exactly as we plant Gooseberry or Currant bushes, from one and a half to six feet apart, according to the kind of stock upon which they are worked. Keep the young shoots thin and regular, stopping them once in the season, say in June, and regulate them by the knife in winter. I am averse to too much summer pruning, as tending to check the flow of the sap too much, and thus causing the tree cells to be over-gorged with juice, which they have no means of evaporating. I have often received trees that have undergone frequent pinching during the summer, and have uniformly found them hide-bound and checked in their health—so much so, that no after care could cure them or ever make them healthy trees. I refer especially to trees sent out by a *great advocate* of repeated summer pinching; they now stand in my nursery, a monument of the man's physiological acumen, and never will be anything but scrubs. Unless great care be taken to avoid depriving a tree too much of its leaves, its health, and the quality and size of the fruit, will be deteriorated; for if we consider the great use of the leaves, we should hesitate to deprive a tree too much of them by repeated summer pinching, and take care to keep up a just equilibrium between the roots and branches. If you wish to keep your trees healthy, pray study the extending system a little. Without leaves you cannot have roots, and without roots your trees will perish. In my next I hope to give a well selected list of the best and most profitable sorts of apples to grow in the Villa Garden.

FLOWER BASKETS FOR THE DRAWING-ROOM.



I AM induced to say a few words in favour of the above for three reasons: first they look so charming if properly filled and arranged, secondly because they last so long in bloom, and thirdly because they cost but little money, a reason by no means to be despised. I have three at present fitted up in the drawing-room; one is high and forms a centre-piece, and the other two are not so high, and form a pair right and left of the centre or taller one, which in the evening is taken into the dining-room and forms a pretty stand for the centre of the table. The advantage of stands of growing flowers over those