

CUT FLOWERS

A considerable quantity and variety of cut flowers are grown throughout the Dominion for commercial purposes in private gardens and in commercially sized areas.

The use of cut flowers for presentation purposes is increasing. The demand for quality flowers in season presents opportunities for those able to arrange contracts with florists and others using large quantities regularly. There are also good prospects for those prepared to raise bulbs for sale (domestic and export), as well as growing for the blooms.

ORCHARD INSTRUCTION AND INSPECTION SERVICE

The return of officers from overseas has enabled more attention to be paid to instructional work in all branches of horticultural-crop production.

In addition to their usual advisory work, officers are called upon to collect data and statistics relating to the horticultural industries to provide sound information when problems are under discussion.

In conjunction with instruction, inspection of orchards has been undertaken. The great majority of commercial growers are maintaining their orchards in a satisfactory condition and reasonably free from pests and diseases.

In the course of the inspections many of the domestic orchards were found to have been somewhat neglected. The occupiers of the properties where disease was found have been instructed as to the control measures which should be applied and as to their responsibilities in this matter.

Special attention is being given to the requirements of ex-servicemen who have taken up orcharding as a career.

DISEASES OF HORTICULTURAL CROPS

Following the cold, wet spring, fungous diseases were more evident than usual. Good control was obtained where efficient spraying was carried out, with the result that very little loss of fruit ultimately occurred.

The dry weather during the summer was favourable to insect pests, but these were kept under control where it was possible to maintain the full spraying programme.

Brown-rot of Stone-fruits.—The position with regard to this disease showed an improvement on last year. In Otago the disease was much in evidence at blossoming-time, but the fruit at harvesting-time was relatively free of infection. The necessary precautions were taken, with satisfactory results.

Citrus Brown-rot.—In the Auckland Province this disease caused some loss during the winter, especially where preventive measures fell short of official recommendations.

Fireblight.—Except for the Nelson district, where fireblight was a little more widespread, especially in quinces, in spite of all care being taken, fruit-trees were not severely affected. Some varieties of Cotoneasters appear to be highly susceptible to this disease.

Ripe-rot on Apples.—Spraying with Bordeaux mixture for this disease is now the general practice. This spray has reduced the infection to a point where it may now be regarded as of relatively little commercial significance.

Silver-leaf.—In the Poverty Bay, Hawke's Bay, and Manawatu districts, silver-leaf caused severe losses of stone-fruit trees.

Verticillium Wilt.—This disease was recorded in the Alexandra district on young apricot-trees which had been planted on land where tomatoes and potatoes had been grown previously.

Crown Gall.—Chinese-gooseberry plants were found to be affected with this bacterial disease. A survey is being made to determine how widespread the disease has become. The possibility of this disease becoming of economic significance in the future is being considered.