

Owing to the increased interest in viticulture there has been a considerable demand for grafted vines and cuttings. With a view of increasing the number of useful varieties of grapes, the Department introduced some sixty new varieties for testing out under New Zealand conditions, and a further consignment is expected to arrive shortly.

The majority of diseases and pests have been readily kept under control. Downy mildew made its appearance in a few places, but any losses sustained from its attacks have been very small.

Growers of grapes under glass have experienced a good season, and prices realized have been satisfactory. A number of new glasshouses were erected during the year.

CIDER-MAKING.

In the main apple-growing districts the making of cider is still receiving considerable attention, and a large quantity of otherwise unsaleable fruit is being profitably utilized. The quantity of cider manufactured during the year is estimated at 50,000 gallons, valued at approximately £12,500.

TE KAUWHATA HORTICULTURAL STATION.

This station is making good headway, and, in addition to being a valuable asset for experimentation in grape-growing and wine-making, it continues to be a commercial asset. The gall fungus continues to do considerable damage in the wattle plantation. The pastures, owing to severe cold in spring and a very dry summer, have not done as well as usual. Twenty acres of new pasture were sown in February, but little progress was made. Twenty acres of wattle plantation were brought into cultivation to supply winter feed for sheep. A further area was cleared, and will be finally cleaned up and ploughed this winter.

Sheep: Wet and cold weather at lambing-time caused heavy mortality, the total losses from all causes being twenty-nine ewes. Otherwise the percentage of lambs was very fair. The total receipts from this branch of the farm were £980—an increase of £455 over last year.

Wattle: The selling of wattle-bark to the tanneries continues to be the main operation in the plantation. Use is also being made of the waste timber by selling it as firewood, but to get a sale it has to be sawn into convenient lengths. Timber-cutting on a royalty basis was continued. Two hundred tons of green bark were harvested. The total receipts from the plantation amounted to £1,620, as against £928 last year.

Grapes and wine: An extension was made to the vineyard by the planting of a number of European varieties new to New Zealand. The extension to the cellar accommodation is thoroughly complete, and the three new vats give extra holding-capacity of 4,500 gallons. The benefit of this extra maturing-space was much appreciated during last vintage, and should result in a more even standard of wine. The stationary spraying outfit installed during the spring has proved very satisfactory. The 11,394 gallons of wine sold realized £5,541.

The financial aspect of the station is still healthy, receipts exceeding expenditure by £1,868.

ORCHARD-REGISTRATION AND ORCHARD-TAX.

Under regulations gazetted on the 19th January, 1928, all orchards from which fruit is sold or planted for the purpose of eventually selling fruit therefrom require to be registered during the month of January in each year, instead of in the month of September as required previously. The Orchard-tax Act was renewed during last session, with certain amendments. The Act now provides that tax shall be payable at the rate of 1s. per acre, with a minimum tax of 5s., and requires to be paid by the 22nd March in each year. Orchards consisting of less than 120 fruit-trees are exempt from tax.

The total number of taxable orchards registered to date is 3,021, and 2,663 non-taxable, making a total of 5,684. The amount payable in tax is £1,269.

REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF NURSERIES.

The bulk of the nurseries inspected are clean and free from disease, and no difficulty is being experienced in having the regulations complied with. Six hundred and ninety-five nurseries were registered during the year, and £695 collected in fees. This represents an increase of fifty-eight registrations as compared with the previous year's figures.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE.

The New Zealand Institute of Horticulture has carried out a great deal of preparatory work in relation to the objects for which it was formed. The educational programme of the Institute has come under special recognition, and in order to place the Institute on a sound footing the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Act was passed last session. Under this Act the Institute will have full legal authority to grant diplomas in horticulture to those qualified and passing examinations during the course of a special training. The Institute is an organization designed to occupy a position with respect to horticultural matters in New Zealand comparable with the function of the Royal Horticultural Society in Great Britain. It has the active support of many of the leading horticulturists, and should play an important part in raising the status of New Zealand horticulture.

IMPORTED FRUIT, PLANTS, ETC.

The examination of all imported fruit, plants, bulbs, &c., has been carried out during the year at the recognized ports of entry—viz., Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, Dunedin, and Bluff. The Inspectors report that the bulk of the consignments arrived in good condition. Several lines of