

ROTTING OF PRUNES.

J. B. Powles hands us the following article written by H. E. Dosch for the Oregonian, with the suggestion that its publication would be of great interest to our growers:

Hillsdale, Or., Sept. 27.—To the Editor: Herewith permit me to hand you a letter just received. In view of the important matter therein contained regarding one of our best fruit industries, and as similar reports have reached me from prunegrowers elsewhere, I kindly ask you to give it space:

Portland, Or., Sept. 22.—H. E. Dosch, Esq., Hillsdale, Or.—Dear Sir: We are having a great many reports come to us that Italian prunes have rotted in transit, arriving at the other end of the line in bad condition. This is not the cause of the low market wholly, as that was undoubtedly caused by oversupply in the hands of irresponsible parties, without facilities for protecting the shippers' interests. This question of rotting in Italian prunes is, nevertheless, a very serious one, as it entirely upsets our previous experience, which showed that the Italian was a remarkable keeper, even when somewhat rain-damaged.

"Knowing that you are interested in horticulture, and desiring to get all facts concerning the keeping qualities of Italian prunes, so that we may be better able to handle them in the future, we take the liberty of encroaching upon your time, and ask you to kindly write us a letter on this subject. Yours very truly,
EARL FRUIT COMPANY.

In reply, allow me to say that the cause of these prunes rotting, even after they are ripe, is a fungous disease, monilia fructigena, and that there is no good reason for its existence. It is simply the result of carelessness and neglect, and the prunegrower has no one to blame but himself. This disease made its first appearance some six years ago, confining its ravages to the tender Hungarian prune. Seeing danger ahead, I sounded the alarm, both at horticultural meetings and through the press. However, no notice was taken of it. A few years later it began to attack our fine Italian and French prunes. I again waved the red flag of danger, but for some unaccountable reason, only a few progressive orchardists sprayed their trees, as directed, with complete success. When I compiled our reports of 1895 and 1897, and bulletin No. 9, I took particular pains to impress upon orchardists the necessity of spraying all fruit trees thereafter in the fall of the year for the various fungous diseases. Had these advices been heeded, no losses would have resulted.

Our humid climate is especially inviting for fungous growth, and this year, owing to our peculiar climatic conditions, this disease has spread with appalling rapidity; the enemy is here in full force, and unless our prunegrowers desire this large and expanding industry totally destroyed, they must marshal their forces at once and fight him all along the line. No unconditional surrender is to be accepted; nothing but total and complete annihilation will do in this case. Brother horticulturists, call a halt in your easy-go-lucky way; girdle on your armor, mount your spray pumps, filled with Bordeaux mixture, and attack him with all the force and energy the case demands, and your efforts will surely be rewarded. The danger is great, and I earnestly beseech you, do not let your hands be idle. Nature has done very much for us in Oregon, but we must not expect too much. "God helps him who helps himself."

When this disease, as well as shothole fungus and curl-leaf, made its appearance in my prune orchard, we attacked all three at once with lime and blue vitrol, and are masters of the situation, none of the three being visible now. The time for the first spraying is close at hand, or as soon as most of the leaves have fallen. With a solution of 10 pounds of lime, six pounds of sulphate copper and 40 gallons of water, properly dissolved and mixed, the trees should be covered from the ground to their utmost branches; again with full-strength Bordeaux mixture, just as the buds are swelling, and again with modified Bordeaux mixture when the prunes have attained the size of hazelnuts. If, however, the disease should make its appearance—which I very much doubt, if the previous sprayings have been done properly—when the fruit is about to mature, they should be sprayed with one pound of copper sulphate to 200 gallons of water. It will also be found, that if spraying is done thoroughly the first year, less sprayings will answer in after years.

Please remember that treatment with fungicides is preventive, not remedial; and it should also be remembered that we cannot always wait for clear weather to spray; cloudy weather or the appearance of rain should not hinder the work. Properly prepared mixtures kill by contact, and will stick to the limbs, foliage and fruit, even through hard rain

storms, provided they have half an hour in which to dry. In fact, nothing short of an actual rain storm should stop the work when the time comes, when it should be done.

In conclusion permit me to add, that the Italian prune is all right, if properly handled and cared for, and nowhere on earth does this delicious fruit grow to such perfection as in Oregon.

HENRY E. DOSCH,
Commissioner First District.

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