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HORTICULTURE

This Department is Edited by Prof. R. S. Northrop, A. C. U.

Editor Deseret Farmer:—Please tell us through "The Farmer" how best to dry prunes on a small scale so that the skins will be tender.

If one should cut and dry prunes without the pips would that spoil the flavor of them?

Yours respectfully, C. C. STEFFENSEN. Murray, Utah.

Answer by R. S. Northrop.

Making Prunes.

To make a first-class prune it is very desirable that the fruit be thoroughly ripe, and if this ripening can be accomplished in dry, warm weather so much the better. There have been seasons when growers have had to gather their prunes in the rain. Under such conditions a first-class prune cannot be made. In dry, warm weather the time occupied in evaporating will be several hours shorter than in dull damp weather. If we had a prune as large as the Italian or Silver, and of as good quality and appearance as these, that would thoroughly ripen by the middle or last of July, we would then be in shape to assure a first-class article annually. At present there is no prune which fills these conditions. Tragedy, a recent introduction from California, ripens early enough, but while it is large and attractive as a green fruit it does not make a very desirable prune, being of a dingy color and quite acid. Golden prune, originated by the late Seth Lewelling, of Oregon, ripens early enough and makes a prune of fair quality, but its color is against it, it requires to be sulphured, and like the silver prune is easily blemished, it is only of medium size and very soft in flesh. Some cross-breeding of the prunes now on hand may result in the variety we are looking for.

Evaporating Prunes.

The first step in the evaporation of prunes is to gather the fruit. It is admitted on all hands that the fruit ought to be thoroughly ripe, so ripe that the greater portion of it is dropping, or ready to drop from the trees; unripe fruit never makes satisfactory

prunes; it will be light in weight and will contain many "frogs." At picking time the ground under the trees will usually be soft and dusty so that no harm comes to the fruit in dropping to the ground. The fruit is gathered from the ground into bushel baskets or boxes, loaded onto wagons, and at once hauled to the dryer, as evaporators are called, and at once put into the grading room. The fruit is usually gathered three times; the first gathering commences when a considerable portion of the fruit has dropped, and will usually consist only of fallen fruit, sometimes, however, the trees are given a gentle shaking and all that falls goes with the first gathering. A second gathering will follow in a few days, again gently shaking the trees. The third and last gathering will include all the late, small, and immature fruit, some of which it will be necessary to hand pick or knock off with poles. This grade is last to run through the dryer, and had better not be mixed with the best fruit.

After the green fruit is gathered it is passed on to the dipping tanks. These tanks, two in number, are conveniently located at the end of the room and on a level with or a little above the floor. The tanks will hold from forty to fifty gallons, the first containing the lye bath, the other the clean water for rinsing the fruit. These tanks are usually placed side by side, or at least only separated by a dripping board on which the basket stands for half a minute or so after leaving the lye bath and before being rinsed. The lye bath is kept almost at the boiling point, and is composed of two pounds of concentrated lye to twenty gallons of water, as the water in the bath is reduced it is added to from time to time more water and more lye. The operator uses his judgment in the matter, if the bath is doing good work, i. e., rutting the skin with a minimum amount of immersion, the bath is alright; if this not the case, more lye is added. From time to time the whole bath is renewed, as it becomes heavily charged with paraffin-bloom of the fruit—and with fruit juices. The rinsing bath is better kept hot, but sometimes it is not so, and the water is

WHITE LEGHORNS LAYING STRAIN OF COCKERELS

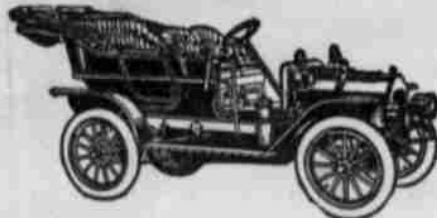
These birds will probably lay as many eggs, right now, as some of your hens—What! Hens don't lay any eggs now? Well, neither do these cockerels, but their mothers, grand-mothers and great grand-mothers for thirty-five generations were selected layers from great egg producers and the egg laying habit is transmitted directly through the male line. If you are not getting all the eggs you wish, try a cross from this laying strain.

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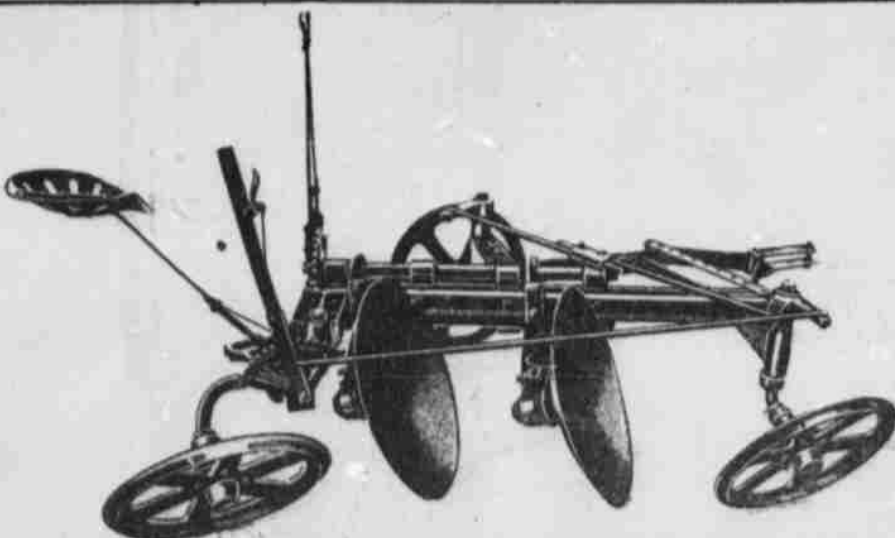


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