

- NEWSY NOTES -

By J. A. Clark, D.Sc.

Grapes

The growing of grapes is the largest fruit industry in the world today. They are processed and sold as table grapes, raisins, and vast quantities are used in the manufacture of wines. It is estimated that the annual world production of grapes exceeds thirty million tons.

The European grape, *Vitis vinifera* L., was one of the first fruits to be cultivated. The location of its origin is not known. Grape seeds have been found in the Switzerland lake dwellings, which indicates that grapes were grown by prehistoric man during the Bronze Age. There is evidence that grapes were grown by the Egyptians 6,000 years ago, for grape seeds have been found in the oldest Egyptian tombs. In the calcareous rocks, in France, grape leaves have been found that have been there from prehistoric times.

The oldest writings in Greek, Hebrew and Latin refer both to grapes and to the making of wine from grapes. It seems evident that the grape originated in the same area as most of the deciduous fruits, somewhere about the Caspian and Black Seas. From there prehistoric man took grape seeds with him when he migrated to other areas, and seeds of grapes were probably also transported by birds, animals and other natural means.

The grapes of the Old World nearly all traced their origin to *Vitis vinifera* L., and are commonly described as European grapes. These grapes have many excellent qualities, the pulp which adheres to the skin is sweet and tender, and the seeds are easily removed. They are grown commercially in favourable climatic areas of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and North and South America. On this continent, they are largely grown in California and the south-western states.

American Grapes

When the Norse Vikings first arrived in North America, they found so many native grapes that they called the territory Vinland. Many years later, when the English colonized the south Atlantic coast of America, they found great grape vines clinging to the forest trees, and along many of the river valleys they found great quantities of grapes. As North America was explored, grapes were discovered in almost every part of what is now the United States, and in the adjoining areas of Canada.

There were many species of American grapes, and though the fox grape, *Vitis labrusca* L., has been used more than the others, at least fourteen American grape species possess special breeding characters that have been used in developing the grape industry. Compared with the European species, the American species have a pulp that separates from the skin, which is tough, and acid in taste. The seeds were difficult to remove. They are, however, considered superior to the European grapes for jellies and jams and are the only kinds used in making grape juice.

The early English colonists along the American Atlantic coast, brought the European grapes to America. They were urged by the London Company to grow them as a source of revenue. From 1619 to 1621 they sent out the best varieties of grapes and French vine-growers to Virginia. Similar vineyards were set out elsewhere. The colonies passed laws encouraging the growing of grapes, offering rewards to successful growers, and penalties to those who refused to grow grapes. Great numbers of vineyards were planted. This effort to grow European grapes failed because of an indigenous American grape root louse. This insect, *Phylloxera vitifoliae* Fitch, was unknown to Europe until about 1860 when the French, to combat mildew, imported rooted vines. It proved disastrous to European grape growing as it spread rapidly from France to adjacent countries. A remedy that saved the industry was found by grafting European varieties on Ameri-

can native rootstocks, resistant to the insects. This practice has since been used by growers of European grapes throughout the world.

Improved Sorts

Climatic and other conditions, besides *Phylloxera*, proved to be unfavorable for the growing of European grapes in Eastern North America. From among the chance seedlings of the American species, *Vitis lambrusca*, a number of commercial varieties were developed. About 1802, J. J. Dufour II named one, Cape, that was popular for a time. This was followed by Concord, discovered by E. W. Bull of Concord, Mass., and Catawba which originated in North Carolina, then Delaware developed by A. Thomson of Ohio. The last two were thought to be natural crosses with European grapes. One hundred years ago, E. S. Rogers of Massachusetts made the first recorded cross between the European and American species. The Agawan variety produced by him is still grown. Charles Arnold, a Canadian, about the same time made similar crosses and two of his hybrids, Canada and Othello, were of good quality and hardy under severe climatic conditions.

Canadian Grape Areas

Grapes do best under dry summer conditions; they are attacked by mildew and other diseases, during humid weather, and are injured by cold winters. They can only be grown outdoors, without winter protection, in Canada in certain favorable areas. Last year the Ontario fruit belt produced 52,850 tons of grapes, valued at three and one half million dollars. Grapes were a more valuable crop in Ontario than either their apples or peaches. British Columbia has grown from a million and a half to two million pounds of grapes a year. Their unit sales price was almost double that received in Ontario. The growing of grapes in the other provinces has been on a limited scale and is not recorded in the regular Agricultural Statistics.

Varieties have been developed and many others tested at our Experimental Stations. Many years ago Moyer was the leading variety at Charlottetown. This year, Portland (white), Red Amber and Bluebell have matured good yields of grapes. These sorts have been in the lead for a number of years. Grapes do not mature later being picked but must be left on the vine until ripe. Unripe grapes are distasteful and liable to wilt and decay. In England, under grass, enormous clusters of grapes have been grown, weighing from twenty to thirty pounds. This crop, started as a luxury, has become quite a profitable industry.

Devotes 25 Years To Boys' Welfare On Ontario Farm

MITCHELL, Ont., Oct. 13—(CP)—The story of an elderly woman who has been mother to a thousand sons is about to end.

Since 1925 Miss Baker's farm in Fullarton Township has been home at one time or another for more than 1,000 boys who have made false starts in life. Cared for by the kindly woman, the majority, committed to the farm by various welfare authorities, have returned to society cured of anti-social tendencies. Few have failed her. At present Miss Baker has seven boys on her farm, but it may be that these are last. A quarter-century devoted almost exclusively to the work of rehabilitation hasn't been easy.

Hattie Baker's interest in boys' welfare can be traced to her father who opened his farm for youth in need of a home. His daughter continued the tradition and often had as many as 60 boys under her care, both in her home and at the homes of neighbors. The young Miss Baker acted as welfare

officer, visiting foster homes to their ages, and help with the check on conditions and treatment. Miss Baker's rehabilitation program centres around work and education. She claims that once you've taught a boy to work you've taken the first step in saving his soul. No boundaries are placed in the way of the boys while they are on the farm. On its 150 acres they help in sowing and harvesting the house and farm chores before going to school. Children of public school age are then taught by Miss Ethel Kennedy on the farm while the others attend Mitchell High School.

Sticking to her philosophy, she has the boys get up between seven and eight o'clock, according to

The benefits of Canada Savings Bonds were explained by Mr. Costello and the use of the gestetner was demonstrated by Mr. Rice. Discussion groups of Grades I to VI led by Mr. Boyer, Grades VII and VIII by Miss Auld, Grades IX and X by Mr. MacArthur followed. Grades I to VI discussed history, Grades IX and X discussed arithmetic.

The trustees of the unit were then introduced by Mr. Rice who also gave an account of his trip to Saskatoon. Following lunch, the meeting adjourned.

MEETING OF TEACHERS OF SCHOOL UNIT NO. 1

The teachers of School Unit No. 1 met at Parkdale School, Tuesday, Oct. 9th when the roll call was answered by twenty-six teachers paying their fee.



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