

**THE LITTLE PRUNING BOOK:
AN INTIMATE GUIDE TO THE
SURER GROWING OF BETTER
FRUITS AND FLOWERS**

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The Little Pruning Book: An Intimate Guide to the Surer Growing of Better Fruits and Flowers
by F. F. Rockwell

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F. F. ROCKWELL

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



The Little Pruning Book

AN INTIMATE GUIDE TO
THE SURER GROWING OF
BETTER FRUITS *and* FLOWERS

by
F. F. Rockwell



*Published in the interest
of Better Gardening by
The PECK, STOW & WILCOX CO.
Makers of Quality Pruning
♦ ♦ ♦ Shears ♦ ♦ ♦*

CLEVELAND, O.
U. S. A.

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to

AGRICULTURE DEPT
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Foreword

A Little Parable About Pruning



[Figs do not grow upon thistles; neither good fruits upon the unpruned tree. He that would have fine flowers, such as are set before kings, let him apply his shears diligently, sparing not the old branches, neither the young growth, nor any part that should be taken away.]

THE long-legged son of farmer Grimes let down the bars, and drove the cattle toward home.

It was a mellow, belated autumn afternoon, and the green-brown world, flooded with a golden mist of light from the leisurely western sun, was good to look upon, and full of dreams. Out of his ragged pocket the boy drew a choice apple which he had been saving for this opportunity to enjoy it uninterruptedly. As he munched he dreamed, as every farmer's boy in a story should, that he would some day go to the city, and live to see famous the name he bore. The apple he devoured was so exceptionally good that instead of lasting him to the barn, as was usually the case, at the end of the lane it was all gone but the core, and that, with a sigh, he tossed over the rail fence.

Of the five seeds which fell with the core, the impertinent little chipmunk who lived in that corner found three. Dead leaves covered the other two; and the snow drifted over them through the winter; and in the spring they put forth leaves and twigs, and fought for existence with the wild choke-cherries and goldenrod which had taken possession of that spot.

In good time it came to pass that farmer Grimes, who was a careful husbandman, got around with his axe and bush hook, for he liked it not that brush should grow in his fence corners.

The first of the little apple trees he cut; and it fell across his boot. Being one who worked with his eyes

open and his wits about him, he noted the leaf. He adjusted his steel-rimmed specs and picked it up.

"What is here?" he said. "An apple among the cherry sprouts."

Now (to fall into the vernacular, which we hate to do), if thrift was a mole-hill, farmer Grimes would be a mountain. So he took the corn-cob out of his mouth, and leaning on his hook, looked again.

So it happened that the second little tree was spared.

But alas, how unfavorable was its environment! Years passed, but the little tree had a mighty hard time of it. It grew where the snow drifted, and many of its branches were broken off. It was handy as a source of switches for everyone who passed to let down the bars for the cattle; and many a promising shoot was cut off and trimmed up only to be broken about the hind legs of any animal that lingered on the way home. The cows themselves, as if in resentment for the part it played in their chastisement, took a passing "hook" at it whenever they got a chance.

More years passed. The little tree had begun to bear apples. The long-legged son of farmer Grimes had gone to the city to get a job in an office where he could wear a pink shirt and consider himself "some cheese". The county had prospered, moderately, until it now boasted on every barn on the way to town, its forthcoming first Big County Fair!

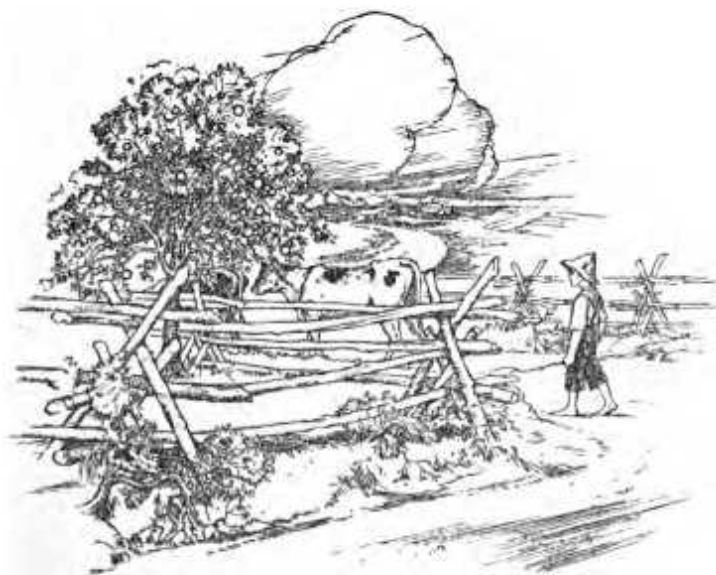
And among the local farmers, competition was especially keen for one entry on the premium list—"the best plate of apples, any variety."

Well, to trim our little story short, the blue card went to "Grimes Foundling" For all this was in the days before everyone knew the importance of pruning; and Chance had done for farmer Grimes what he didn't know—then—how to do for himself.

In the succeeding years many "whips" were cut from that wayside tree—but not to beat cows with. They went into other orchards for grafting, and made that section famous. And they brought the thrifty old farmer many an iron man, in those long-ago days when an I. M. could go to the grocery store and march home with

something more than nine pounds of beet sugar to its credit!

Moral: There is only one thing that pays better than having a sound knowledge of pruning: and that is —to USE it. The following pages are for you:





Why Prune?

The Reasons for Pruning; and What It Accomplishes

WHAT is pruning?

Every one knows, in a general way, what is meant by pruning. But to make perfectly clear at the beginning just what we are talking about, let us give the following definition:

Pruning is the removal from a plant of that part which is undesirable or superfluous.

In other words, pruning is one of the arts of the grower—or of the horticulturist, if you prefer! by which he or she obtains better results than nature, unassisted, would give. All of the arts of the grower are bent to one or both of two definite ends: to improve results, or to make them more certain. Pruning does both.

The gardener's work, in almost every thing he does, is to *co-operate* with Nature. To the extent he learns how to do this, his efforts will be rewarded by success. His problem really is to discover the things he can do that will actually be working with nature, and not counter to her way of doing things. The "improving on nature" which one hears much about is in reality merely lending her a helping hand, by following the tips she herself gives. When we interpret these tips correctly and are guided accordingly, it means successful gardening.

What can Nature show us about pruning?

Go out into the wood, or peer into the hedgerow down the road, and you will see that the Old Dame herself is the greatest pruner that ever came down the pike! Even in your garden, when you come to understand just what she is doing, you will see that she has attended to so much of the pruning herself that what is left for you to do is merely supplementary. But in the wood or the hedgerow it is easier to see how she takes care of the job. Every dead branch on a tree; every dead twig under your foot; is the result of the remorseless use of her invisible pruning shears. When you come to see