

Blueberry Report for Year 1925

January 30th, 1926.

Joseph J. White, Inc.,
New Lisbon, New Jersey.

Gentlemen:

The report on the blueberry work at Whitesbog for the year 1925 is as follows:

FRUIT PRODUCTION

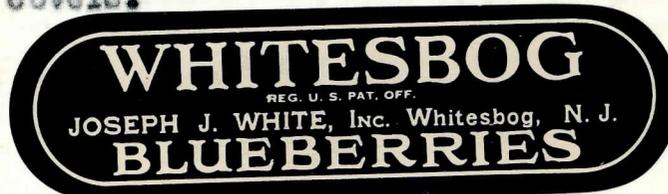
While we did not secure as good vegetative growth on our blueberry plants in 1924 as we have most other seasons, the wood that did grow was well matured. The plants came through the winter in good condition and no damage was noted from winter-killing. All of our plants were pruned, either by our men during the winter or early spring, or by the Italian women who came about April 1st and worked on the pruning until it was completed about four weeks later. There was little or no damage to the flowers or small berries from spring frosts and an excellent set of fruit was obtained. There was some blasting on a few hybrids in Union Field but none was observed on the named varieties. Cultivation was started April 24th and two teams were kept steadily at it until the berries began to ripen, with some cultivation after that. We had an extended drought from the last of May until about the tenth of July and some very hot days in late May and early June. While no specific ill effects were noted on the plants or berries, I think that this extended drought had some effect in decreasing the average size of berries harvested. It was quite noticeable that this season we had no excessively large berries, although the general size and quality was good. The drought was followed by light showers early in July and heavy rains later that furnished ample moisture for the berries after July 10th. The total crop harvested was 11210-1qt.

Table No.1 accompanying gives the amount harvested from the various fields while Table No.2 gives the total number of crates of each grade with the average price and total proceeds from the sale of each grade. Table No.3 shows the comparative crops and receipts from 1916 to 1925, inclusive. The 1925 crop was picked from about 30 acres, many of which, of course, have not yet reached maturity; in fact, none of the plants except in

Union Field have reached their mature size and maximum production. We had an average of 31 fall pickers for the season. Our best day's picking was 60 crates-4 quarts on July 15th. On July 9th and 10th we picked over 60 crates per day.

The bulk of our crop was again marketed through W. O. & H. W. Davis, New York Commission merchants, and their services were satisfactory as heretofore. One difficulty that we noticed, and which we will need to take steps to overcome hereafter, is that while our fields of named varieties produce large berries of the best grade, packed in transparent covers, the berries from Union Field (which this year produced nearly 2/3 of our crop) are nearly all of second and third grade. We picked in Union Field three or four days a week and on those days the bulk of our shipments were of second class berries. On the other two days we picked in fields of named varieties and shipped a large quantity of first-grade berries. The result was that the supply of first grade berries reaching the market was very irregular. While our shipments of first grade berries ordinarily ranged from 3 to 10 crates per day, on two days in the height of the season we shipped 47 and 53 crates of this grade. On each of the days on which we made these large shipments the price of the first grade berries dropped 5 cents a quart. It is evident that we need to equalize shipments of the first and second grade berries so that about the same number of crates of each grade reach market each day, enabling our selling agents to work up a regular trade for the quantity of crates they will have to handle. If, as will necessarily be the case, on some few days during the height of the season we have a sufficient quantity of first grade berries to break the price, then I believe it will be desirable for us to ship this surplus to some other market, even if we have to make a slight sacrifice in the price. I have not had an opportunity to discuss this with the Davis firm, but will do so at the first opportunity and find out if it is their opinion that if we equalize shipments, as outlined above, they can expect to secure a better average price for us during the season.

The use of transparent covers was continued on our best grade berries with satisfaction. A paper seal as shown below featuring our Whitesbog trade mark was obtained for fastening these covers.



Our second grade berries were packed in brown paper covers with the Whitesbog trade mark as heretofore, and our third grade berries in a gray paper cover under the new Star brand. As these third grade berries are so poor in quality it seemed undesirable for our name to appear on them. A very few small soft berries picked late in the season were shipped as wild berries

without paper covers. Attention is called to the fact that the cover that emphasizes our Whitesbog trade mark to the greatest extent is the one which is placed on the second grade berries. I feel that within the two years we should change our grades and eliminate the brown paper cover with the Whitesbog trade mark. I think the grades which we should establish for permanent use are:

1.- A Whitesbog grade, shipped with transparent covers, which will include sound berries of good size from our named varieties or from other varieties under trial from which the berries are of equally good quality.

2.- Second grade covered with gray paper covers with the Star Brand trade mark, which will include sound berries of uniform size that are now packed under the Whitesbog brown cover.

3.- The third grade which will include small and soft berries, to be shipped without paper covers as wild berries.

While for the past two seasons approximately 1/3 of our crop has been of the third grade berries, this proportion should rapidly decrease as additional acres of named varieties come into bearing, and as we replace the poorer hybrids in Union Field with better berries.

Mr. Stanley Coville continued shipments with us under our brands, just as he did last year. It seems probable that next year other growers will begin shipments and we must therefore decide upon a policy with regard to cooperating with them and furnishing them with marketing information and suggestions.

Fertilizer was applied to all our fields between May 18th and June 1st, using the same mixture and quantity as in previous years. Early in the Spring we observed that a small plot of about 30 plants to which we had made an experimental application of cotton seed meal as fertilizer in 1924 was making extraordinary good growth as compared with the plants in adjacent rows. We, therefore, decided that a much more extensive trial of this form of fertilizer was advisable and so made a supplementary application to a large number of plants on some of the poorer ground in July, using cotton seed meal and dried blood. These fertilizers are slow to act and we will not observe results before next Summer.

On the first few days that we picked we observed many more fruit worms in the berries than we have seen heretofore. These disappeared, however, within about a week after we started picking. No new insects, pests or diseases were noted at Whitesbog, but Mr. Coville at Rake Pond has encountered some

difficulty from white grubs and from the cranberry root worm. I do not anticipate that we will have trouble with white grubs at Whitesbog, but it is possible that in some of our heaviest blueberry soil we may have the cranberry root worm. I observed in the lower part of Canal Field where the soil is heaviest a small amount of damage from an insect that had been feeding on the leaves of the plants, which was similar to the injury done to the foliage of Mr. Coville's plants by the adult of this root worm, so I think it is possible that we have a few of the root worms, but that they are not bad enough yet to seriously damage the plants. Last winter the Double Trouble Company suffered serious damage by deer eating off the tops of the plants including all the fruit buds. This is being repeated again this winter. We have never noted similar damage at Whitesbog.

No new planting of Government plants was made in 1925, but we understand that a number of seedlings are now being grown and are to be set out at Whitesbog in the fall of 1926. Plants from about two acres in Union Field and about 1/3 of an acre in Triangle Field, which have been under trial but have proven to be of such poor quality that it seemed undesirable to retain them, were grubbed out and replaced with plants of named varieties and plants that have been selected as being worth a secondary trial. 1150 plants of 30 varieties that have been selected because they seem promising as possible better varieties that ripen early in the season were included in those set in Union Field for further trial. We may get a few berries from these plants next summer, but cannot hope to have sufficient berries to judge of their value before 1927. Plants from approximately an acre additional were grubbed from Union Field last fall preparatory to resetting the space to plants of better quality next spring. Probably this replacing of some of the plants under trial will need to continue almost every year for a number of years as we build up the quantity and quality of the blueberries we produce.

In South Spung Field we set out three acres to Pioneer and three acres to Cabot last Spring. This practically completed this field, there being only a small fraction of an acre, which is now occupied by an open ditch, to be planted, when a tile drain is put in the ditch. This drain with numerous branches should be laid next Summer.

We now have approximately 53 acres planted to Blueberries. A portion of Tranquillity Field has been prepared for planting and approximately five acres will be planted in the Spring. More of it can be prepared and planted by next Fall.

An additional tile drain about 500 ft. long has been installed near the middle of Union Field to improve the drainage of a spot where the plants have never made satisfactory growth or produced well, because it was too wet during wet seasons. I believe that this drain will make this part of the field much more productive.

Among the improvements necessary during the coming

year are:

The installation of a long tile drain with necessary branches through the center of South Spung Field.

Lower the outlet drain pipe that carries the drainage from South Spung Field into the Spillway Ditch, in order to improve the drainage of the field and make the proposed tile drain effective.

Build two additional packing sheds, one in Union Field and one in South Spung Field.

Plant a portion of Tranquility Field in the Spring and prepare the land and plant more of the field in the Fall. All the preparation that is needed is to disc the land and keep it thoroughly cultivated during the Summer.

NURSERY

We obtained better results from our propagation this year than last and rooted a good percentage of Hubel and Pioneer cuttings though a much smaller percentage of Cabot and Adams rooted. The formation of roots on the cuttings continues to be very irregular. Different lots of cuttings that are apparently just alike and that have had exactly the same treatment will give far different results in the percentage that will form roots, and in most cases we can see no reason for this irregularity.

Only a few of the rooted cuttings have been dug and until they are dug it is impossible to make an estimate of the quantity that have been rooted with any reasonable degree of accuracy. The cuttings will be dug and transplanted early in the Spring at which time they will be counted.

The cost of propagation in 1925 was \$2,466.49 as compared with \$2851.42 in 1924 and \$4,211.47 in 1923. Although the rooted cuttings can not be counted until they are dug, I am confident that we rooted more than we did in 1924, but not as many as in 1923. The above cost figures include the cost of labor, propagators salary and expense items incurred for the actual propagation performed during the year. The cost of the care of the older plants in the nursery will be given below.

NURSERY FIELD

We obtained excellent growth in the Nursery Field on all the plants that were carried over from the previous year and that were set out early in the Spring. Some of our planting was

done quite late in the Spring extending into early Summer and these plants did not make as much growth as those set out earlier. From this experience as well as that of previous years it is very evident that the plants should be transplanted either in the Fall or very early in the Spring. For Spring planting the ground should be thoroughly prepared the Fall before so that there will be no delay when weather becomes suitable for planting.

The estimated amount of nursery stock on hand and the cost per plant of each grade of stock after making an allowance of 25% for possible losses are shown in the following table:

	No. of plants	Cost.
Plants 15"-18" high (3 years old)	1000	34¢
Retail size plants for small orders	43,000	17¢
Medium size plants 8"-10" high for commercial plantings	24,000	12½¢
Plants too small for sale in the Spring of 1926	11,000	8½¢
	<u>79,000</u>	

The total investment in nursery stock at the end of 1925 including rooted cuttings, was \$11,761.79 as compared with \$12,514.43 in 1924 and \$13,504.11 in 1923. It will be noted that a slight reduction in the total investment in nursery stock has been made during each of the past two years.

We have plowed and have in course of preparation additional land for the nursery in Florence Field. This land has been partially tile drained, but must have more drains installed next Spring before it is planted. We find it necessary to put the drains closer together and deeper than was at first anticipated in order to provide sufficient drainage to make the treatments for the Japanese Beetle grubs effectively and economically. We find it is impracticable to use the same ground to produce a crop of plants every year as it is impossible to get the plants out early enough in the Spring to set other plants. Our procedure will therefore be to set out plants in the Fall or Spring, grow them through one Summer and sell them the following Spring. The ground will lie fallow during the succeeding Summer and will be replanted the following Fall or Spring.

NURSERY SALES

Our advertising program was slightly increased for 1925 and expenditures for advertising including payments to periodicals and to H. W. Ayer & Son but not including cost of circulars, postage and so forth were \$3,516.23. This covered advertising in six periodicals circulating among farmers who

might prove to be commercial growers of blueberries, 6 magazines circulating among home gardeners and 3 Sunday newspapers. The newspapers were unprofitable and will not be used again. Several of the other periodicals barely paid for the cost of advertising or paid only a small margin above cost so it has seemed advisable to drop these and as a result it is proposed to expend only \$1,500 for advertising in 1926.

Sales in 1925 were as follows:

	No. Orders	No. Plants	Value
Orders received in 1924, but shipped in 1925	56	2,615	1,832.30
Total orders received in 1925	<u>1,455</u>	<u>26,747</u>	<u>25,118.41</u>
Less orders received in 1925 to be shipped in 1926	<u>17</u>	<u>2,885</u>	<u>1,999.63</u>
Total orders shipped in 1925	1,494	26,477	24,951.08
Orders amounting to \$23,197.84 were shipped in 1924 and \$7,337.86 in 1925.			

The orders received in 1924 and 1925 came from the following sources:

	1925	1924
From new inquiries resulting from advertising, publicity, etc. during the current year	\$11,080.98	\$15,067.87
Re-orders from previous customers	4,369.46	3,243.81
New customers from names already in our files	<u>9,667.97</u>	<u>4,227.03</u>
Total value of orders received during year	\$25,118.41	\$22,538.71

During 1925 we distributed 302 plants to Agricultural Experiment Stations, County Agricultural Agents and similar agencies for trial and demonstration. These plants were furnished without charge, with the understanding that we are to have reports on the results secured.

The following is the disposition made of the plants removed from the nursery during the year:

New plantings in our own fields	6,161
Replanting discarded trial plants in our own fields	3,770
Nursery sales	<u>26,477</u>

Brought forward 36,408

Free replacements to customers (including a reserve of 726 plants to cover replacements that have not yet been reported)	2,082
Demonstrations	382
	<hr/> 40,872

It will be noticed that the replacements were extraordinarily heavy although in previous years they have been practically negligible. The heavy loss was caused by the treatment of plants to kill the grubs of the Japanese Beetle which was performed for the first time this year. There were few losses among the plants treated in the fall of 1924, but heavy losses occurred among those treated the following Spring, especially those treated late in the Spring. We therefore treated what we anticipate will be needed next Spring, last October and November, and if we find that more must be treated next Spring will treat them as early as possible.

The last of September I made a two weeks automobile trip to New England to see some of the trial plantings that have been made there and to call upon the more important of our prospective customers. The plants I saw on Cape Cod were thriving and I was impressed with the fact that there seemed to be an excellent field there for a large number of plant sales to small or medium sized commercial growers, who might put in from a quarter acre to five or ten acres of blueberries. The successful trial planting at the Massachusetts State Bog at East Wareham, is undoubtedly a great asset to us and is evidently going to form a center around which numerous commercial plantings will develop. I believe that this territory is going to be ready to go into blueberries heavily within the next two or three years and that we should concentrate considerable effort upon it and have some one spend some time there this year in getting acquainted with, and advising prospective growers.

I found much interest in the commercial possibilities of Whitesbog Blueberries in all sections that I visited, but think commercial plantings of any extent will be slow in developing except on the Cape. Elsewhere the soil is quite different from that which we have at Whitesbog, and although wild blueberries flourish in it, it does not seem so suitable for growing them under cultivation and will possibly require different methods of care than we practise at Whitesbog. I found some plants doing well in these heavier soils of western Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire and believe that in the course of time an increased demand for plants will develop in that section.

Respectfully submitted,

Note: Tables nos. 1, 2 & 3, will be found on the two last pages.

TABLE # 1.

CROPS FROM BLUEBERRY FIELDS-1925

<u>Spillway Field</u>		<u>Crates</u>	<u>Quarts</u>
Lowbush hybrids	54 - 14		
Sau	53 - 9		
Harding	29 - 22		
Young plants of various varieties	<u>7 - 15</u>	124	28
<u>Union Field</u>		726	14
<u>South Spang Field</u>			
Cabot	17 - 16		
Pioneer	61 - 19		
Young plants of various varieties	<u>14 - 20</u>	93	23
<u>Triangle Field</u>		64	5
<u>Old Field</u>		5	18
<u>Canal Field</u>			
Rubel	88 - 18		
Grover	<u>17 - 25</u>	106	11
		<u>1181</u>	<u>1</u>

TABLE # 2.

BLUEBERRY CROP AND SELLING PRICE -1925

Sales thru W.O. & H.W. Davis, New York

Grade	No. crates	Net receipts	Average net price Crate	Quart
Transparent	222 - 29	\$3086.38	13.82	43.2¢
Whitesbog	485 - 10	5738.62	11.81	36.9¢
Star Brand	336 - 16	3015.18	8.96	28. ¢
No cover	9 - 0	46.13	5.12	16. ¢
<u>Total thru Davis</u>	<u>1053 - 23</u>	<u>\$ 11,886.31</u>	<u>\$11.26</u>	<u>35. ¢</u>
Sales direct to customers	58 - 3	901.78	\$15.52	48.5
	<u>1111 - 26</u>	<u>\$12,788.09</u>		

TABLE # 3

BLUEBERRY CROPS AND PRICES
 SEVEN YEARS 1916 to 1925 INCLUSIVE

Year	Picking Begun	Picking Finished	No. days actually picked	Length of Season Days	Total Crop	Total Receipts	Average price per quart net from Davis.
1916	6-30	8-9	12	40	21-11	\$ 114.81	
1917	6-30	8-20	29	51	127-15	829.16	
1918	6-10	8-1	19	52	100- 5	861.48	
1919	6-17	8-14	28	58	309- 3	2,956.96	.318
1920	6-28	8-18	36	51	532-24	5,784.45	.352
1921	6-14	7-28	19	45	308-24	3,874.28	.407
1922	6-20	8-8	32	49	966-14	10,059.90	.333
1923	6-26	8-14	32	49	717- 5	8,761.55	.368
1924	7-7	8-28	39	52	761- 4	9,464.31	.385
1925	6-19	8-13	35	55	1121- 1	12,788.09	.352