TROPICAL FRUIT GROWING IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA.

Not Available for Commercial Purposes—Plant Only for Home Use.

By W. P. Neeld, of the Committee.

Of course we know of no other section of the State where tropical fruits have been grown except in South Florida. If there is truly more happiness in pursuit than in possession we can heartily recommend tropical fruit-growing in any "favored locality" south of the twenty-eighth parallel of latitude. Our experience in this industry is confined to the little sub-peninsula of Pinellas on the west side of Tampa Bay. Our observation embraces about all of Southwest Florida.

The lower sub-peninsula high pine lands seemed to be especially adapted to the mango and avocado pear. It would be tedious to mention all the tropical fruits that we have demonstrated to be unsuited to our pine lands, and we have no hammocks. The tamarind, the sugar apple, the Jamaica apple and the sapadillo, are notable failures with us, though these fruits seem to flourish on the islands further south, while the mango is almost a failure, except at or about Fort Myers. On the island of Marco the avocado pears were quite prolific, but not near so fine as with us, while the mango was not in evidence, or at least not in countenance.

The writer does advise the setting of a few trees of a tropical nature and of a kind demonstrated to be "at home," but he does not advise any one to attempt to grow tropical fruits for market. After we had run the gauntlet of the colds of average winters and produced thousands of boxes or crates of mangoes and avocado pears there was no extensive market for them. A few cities in the South paid fairly well for our product, but strangers did not like them, and our marketing was a flat failure, to use a terse term.

If history is to repeat itself and climates never change—in the history of man—we may expect our tropical fruit trees to be destroyed in the future as in the past.

Pineapples are grown successfully under sheds, and a great many are being set continually. The writer is an advocate of the high lands for pines, and favors the lower sub-peninsula as the best locality he knows.