crop it seemed they should. For South Florida we have not yet hit upon the proper methods to make peaches a success. So far as my observation goes, I know nothing to recommend, but continued trial of different varieties and different methods of cultivation.

In plums the Kelsey was very full of bloom, but failed to set anything like a crop. In one instance I have learned of full crops being obtained by spraying when in full bloom. If this was the cause of the crop, it would seem that some insect preying on the blossoms was the cause of the failure to set fruit. I did not learn of this spraying till too late for this year's bloom, but it seems to me worthy of trial. With me the Botan has been a complete failure; also the Marianna, both on its own roots and on wild plum. From my limited experience, success seems to me to lie in the direction of selecting the best of our wild varieties, and by cultivation and fertilizing, they may be greatly improved. On my own grounds I have two varieties that we think a great deal of; one of them is of good size and almost entirely free from bitter tang; the other is small, dark purple, the size of a very large cherry, the pit and fruit resemble very much a cherry; we use them in the kitchen just as we would cherries, and many do not detect the difference; we can them, and make jellies, jams and preserves. Both of these varieties are fruitful, and though in full bloom in the February freeze, have in spite of all the adverse circumstances, set some fruit.

It seems to me it will be well to turn our attention toward some of these native varieties, with a view to their improvement, as the most hopeful outlook at present.

PEAR CULTURE.

The following paper, by S S Harvey, of Quintette, Escambia County, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Pears and Apples, reached the Secretary after the meeting had adjourned.

[SEE MINUTES ON PAGE 4, ITEM 43.]

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW MEMBERS:—As Chairman of your Committee on Pears, I have to report a very considerable increase of acreage throughout the pear belt, which only includes the northern portion of the State. There have been well directed efforts of intelligent men to cultivate the pear in Central and Southern Florida, but the success attending these efforts is not encouraging. I find some very fine-looking pear trees through the centre of the State, that will not fruit, and all efforts to fertilize them, so as to make them productive, have failed. As we have pears fruiting well in the northern tier of counties, on soil similar to the soil on which some of these failures occur, it seems probable that the trouble is the result of climatic causes.

The two varieties of pears that have been most generally planted in the pear belt are the LeConte and Keiffer, the LeConte being decidedly in the lead in acreage put in.

The LeConte pear tree is such a wonderful wood maker, and bears such immense crops of fruit, that it has appeared that all that was necessary was to set out the young trees, and in a few years gather a crop of fruit—that even when handled and marketed in the most crude manner, it gave almost fabulous returns per acre.
The ease with which fine returns have been obtained, has caused increased acreage and a carelessness in growing the orchards, gathering, packing and marketing the fruit, that must, if continued, make very sick, if it does not kill, the goose that produces these wonderful results.

The LeConte is a very fine pear, if handled with reasonable good judgment. It is a very poor, almost worthless, fruit, if handled without good judgment. In cultivating the tree, rare good sense must be used to get the tree into proper shape and able to carry a portion of the fruit it will set. Its natural disposition is to make long, willowy limbs, and set a great mass of fruit at the extreme ends of those limbs. This natural disposition must be counteracted, so as to force increased size of limbs for their length, and distribute the fruit more evenly over the tree, and at the same time keep the fruit nearer the base of supply of food—the body and roots. After you have succeeded in raising fine trees, great care is necessary in preventing the trees from overloading—thinning out the trees severely. After this fruit has grown to be about mature, great care must be observed as to the proper time to pick it from the tree. Take a large, handsome pear from the tree before it is mature, and it will shrivel and become a tough, woody, tasteless mass—no juice, no flavor. Allow it to mature on the tree, and pick it just as it changes to a light green—the skin becomes glazed at that time—and it will ripen in a few days to a rich, juicy fruit, of fine flavor. If covered with paper, or placed in a dark place, it will be much better. Then, again, if the fruit is allowed to remain on the trees until it begins to ripen—turn yellow—it becomes dry and mealy, and will rapidly decay at the core. It is the first and last of these stages that has given and will continue to give, if persisted in, a bad name to the LeConte pear in the Northern markets. More care and better judgment must be used in picking and shipping the fruit, or we will find no market for the LeConte pear. I assert most positively that the LeConte is a fine fruit, one of the very best of pears, if raised, picked and handled properly. But I also think it the most difficult of good pears to handle properly. Great care must be used in picking from the trees, and still greater care must be used in the packing house to leave out all the under and over-ripe fruit.

At present the deciduous fruit business of our State is carried on in a loose, hap-hazard way; unless we cultivate and market in a better, more business-like manner, we will find but little profit; and any year of a general full crop, we are likely to come out of the season with a large portion of the fruit on our hands, and a dead loss on that we send into market. The careless, indifferent shipper will destroy the markets and make a loss for all raisers.

The Keiffer pear is a fine wood maker, an early bearer, and the trees carry immense crops. It is still a question, to be decided by experience, as to whether it can be made a good money crop for our pear belt. The fruit grows to immense size, is not a very good hand pear, but one, if not the very best, of cooking pears. In the natural order, it should ripen here the last of September, but is fine for all culinary purposes if picked from the tree during August, long before it is full grown. If put in the market during September or October, it comes in competition with the general fruit crop of the Middle and Northern States.

The Bartlett, Duchess d'Angouleme, Garber, Lawson, Jefferson, Clapp's Favorite, Sugar Seckel, Winter Nellis, and many
other varieties do well in Florida. They nearly all make wood slow, come into bearing late, and are shy bearers when compared with LeConte or Keiffer; so they are not yet cultivated to any great extent. But as the deciduous fruit industry is brought to a commercial basis, I am satisfied many of these varieties will be extensively cultivated. It is only within a few years that any attention was paid to deciduous fruits in our State. I think it was but two years since, that the first full car load of deciduous fruit was shipped out of West Florida. From indications now, there will be over one hundred full car loads this year, and the business is only in its infancy. In the northern tier of counties pears will be the leading fruit cultivated. But peaches are rapidly coming to the front, and may lead in quantity produced in the near future.

The blight appeared in some of the orchards of Middle Florida several years since. It gradually spread from year to year, until now there are but a few orchards in the State that have not been attacked by that disease, so feared by the pear growers the world over. In some cases the orchards have been almost destroyed, in others very little damage has been done. But even where very severe, trees recover from it, and again bear the usual amount of fruit.

The Division of Vegetable Pathology of the Department of Agriculture has for a number of years been making a special study of the blight. They have carried on extensive experiments under the most favorable conditions, and we may well look to them for a remedy, or means of prevention, if either is possible to man.

It is settled beyond doubt that the blight is caused by microbes, likely of the plant kingdom; they belong to the family of bacteria, the smallest of living things. The question of dissemination is still unsettled, but the best authorities now think the microbes are disseminated by insects. It is agreed that the microbes only enter the tree through the tender buds and flowers, and pass to the larger limbs or body from the small stems, spurs, or limbs. It is also well settled that the microbe winters in the tree affected, and if all diseased parts are carefully cut away and destroyed by burning, the disease will be much less prevalent and the damage to orchards be materially reduced. A careful cutting when the disease is shown by the dead leaves, and again in the fall at the annual pruning or thinning out, would be of great service, and with our present knowledge, the only preventive. The danger of leaving on the tree or ground, the diseased wood, may be likened to leaving the body of a person who had died of yellow fever unburied. The sap of some trees may not be a congenial medium for the propagation of the microbe, as some people's blood is not a congenial medium for the propagation of the yellow fever microbe. It seems to me that the remedy, if found, must be in working on the sap of the tree.

But with all the damage the blight has done, or may do, the cultivation of pears for profit is, and will continue to be, one of the leading industries of Northern Florida. The greatest damage to the prospects at present is careless cultivation, gathering, packing and marketing. Once get the business down to a business basis, so that the careless, ignorant and indifferent cannot destroy the reputation of the fruit, the cultivation of deciduous fruits, and especially the pear, will be a good paying business.