

INVENTORY OF FOREIGN SEEDS AND PLANTS.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

The present inventory consists almost entirely of a continuation of the list of garden vegetables, fruits, forage plants, and ornamentals secured by Mr. Walter T. Swingle, Agricultural Explorer of this Department, in France, Italy, and Algeria. These represent a careful selection of the newer and more promising varieties and species recently introduced into cultivation, which seemed worthy of being tested in the United States. An extensive series of varieties of the European grape, which would come numerically in this inventory, is to be issued separately. Cuttings are not available for general distribution, having been imported in quantities sufficient only to permit tests which are being made in cooperation with the Division of Pomology at various points in the South Atlantic States, Louisiana, and Kansas. An importation of ten tons of seed rice, secured by Prof. S. A. Knapp from the island of Kiushu, Japan, appears under No. 1962, but the fruit trees and ornamentals obtained by him arrived much later, and an inventory of them will be published hereafter. There are also some varieties of interest, particularly for the subtropical parts of the country and the newer insular possessions, sent from the West Indies by the Hon. Barbour Lathrop and Mr. D. G. Fairchild, while on their way to South America.

It will, of course, be readily understood by all who examine these inventories that the values of the various importations are extremely unequal. Some may prove of technical interest merely, while others will have far-reaching commercial importance. For example, the Turkestan alfalfa distributed last year bids fair to extend materially the range of cultivation of this valuable crop, the recently imported sort having proved more resistant both to cold and to drought than the variety previously in cultivation in the West.

It is not to be expected that all the species or varieties secured by our agricultural explorers will prove to be entirely new to specialists or dealers. Many plants have been imported and tested heretofore without any permanent record as to results. We are intentionally securing small quantities of the seeds of many such species, either to permit tests by some improved methods of culture or for distribution to parts of the country where experiments have not been made. Furthermore, specialists in various crops often apply for imported seed of well-known plants, in order to ascertain by careful comparative tests the existence of differences in vigor or other qualities, some of which, though inconspicuous, are economically of great importance. It should