

2554. ZIZYPHUS SATIVA.**Jujube.**

From Marseilles, France. Received through Mr. W. T. Swingle, February, 1899.

"Variety with large fruits." An improved sort, propagated by suckers. (See No. 2194.)

2555. PYRUS GERMANICA.**Medlar.**

From Marseilles, France. Received through Mr. W. T. Swingle, February, 1899.

"Variety with large fruits." A hardy European tree with edible fruits.

2556. CAPPARIS SPINOSA.**Caper.**

From Marseilles, France. Received through Mr. W. T. Swingle, February, 1899.

Cuttings of the cultivated form. (See No. 2164.)

2557. FICUS CARICA.**Caprfig.**

From Marseilles, France. Received through Mr. W. T. Swingle, February, 1899.

2558 to 2604. VITIS VINIFERA.**Grape.**

These grapes, imported from France through Mr. W. T. Swingle, have been turned over to the Division of Pomology. They are not for general distribution. (See also Nos. 2381 to 2511.)

2605. ASPARAGUS OFFICINALIS.**Asparagus.**

From Argenteuil, France. Received through Mr. W. T. Swingle, February, 1899.

"Hatif Louis L'Herault." An early sort. This and the following are improved French varieties.

The field methods of cultivation of asparagus at Argenteuil are as follows: The plants are set in rows about 2 yards apart. A hole 18 inches in diameter is dug, deepest at its edges, leaving a little mound of solid earth in the center. The little plant is placed with its roots spread out over this central mound at the bottom of the hole, and the earth is filled in, leaving the crown about 2 or 3 inches below the general level of the ground. Each spring earth is heaped up about the plants, and finally mounds are made 20 inches wide and 8 to 12 inches high above the level of the soil. In autumn the canes are cut off 8 inches above the mound, and the mound is leveled to the general surface of the ground, to be again built up the following spring. In the fourth year one or two shoots can be pulled, but the first good yield is not attained until the fifth year. During the picking season the mounds are examined every day, and as soon as the tip of a shoot forces its way through the soil the earth is loosened around it. It is then grasped and broken off at the base by a twisting motion. The bearing season continues for 6 weeks on old plants, as many as 15 or 20 shoots being produced from one root. The canes are allowed to grow all summer. Asparagus shoots grown in this way are often 10 to 15 inches long, and 1 to 2 inches diameter. They sell in the Paris markets during April and May at from 15 to 80 cents per pound. The plants are well manured every alternate spring with well-rotted stable manure or night soil.

The best varieties of asparagus are, in the order of merit, (1) Early Louis L'Herault; (2) Late rose; (3) Medium Louis L'Herault; (4) Late violet.

In forcing asparagus, seedlings are cultivated during the first year much after the manner of onions, and are transplanted when 1 year old at intervals of 20 inches in each direction. Two years after transplanting, if the plants have been properly fertilized and cultivated, they are ready for forcing. They are dug with a very broad-shared plow, shaken free from earth, and brought to the greenhouses from time to time during the winter as required. Of course the tops have to be cut off in autumn to facilitate digging the roots. These asparagus plants consist of a tuft of stout roots about one-fourth inch in diameter, spread out horizontally about a central crown, which shows a number of buds ready to sprout. These plants are now forced as follows: In case a greenhouse is used, they are arranged directly on the floor of low benches having bottom heat, without any earth whatever between them and the bench. The plant is taken in hand, the roots brought to a parallel bundle, and the whole placed in upright position tightly pressed against the other plants. Instead of being 20 inches apart, as in the field, the plants are now scarcely more than 4 inches. When the entire bench is full fine earth is sifted over the tops of the plants until they are covered to the depth of half an inch. They are then watered