

Winter Injury on the Lower Mainland of  
British Columbia, 1955-56

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H. N. W. Toms

Until 10 Nov., the fall of 1955 was mild with practically no frost. Rain fell almost continuously from mid-October until 7 Nov. Corn was still being canned on 5 Nov. and a large tonnage of root and green vegetables remained unharvested. The mild fall greatly delayed ripening and maturing of the crops. Then overnight on 10-11 Nov. temperatures dropped suddenly from 52°F. to as low as 7°F. for a week. Some 3500 tons of root vegetables and over 1000 tons of green vegetables still in the field or stored unprotected in barns were a total loss and damage was extensive in many other crops. December was relatively mild but some frost occurred in January, February and March. The winter therefore afforded little opportunity for injured plants to recover from the severe November freeze.

The review below is based on personal observations and on information provided by the Horticultural Branch, B. C. Dept. of Agriculture, at Abbotsford.

#### Small Fruits

**Strawberries:** 75-90% of the plantings killed, young planting stock severely injured. Losses less in weedy fields.

**Raspberries:** Newburgh and Lloyd George suffered sev. damage to the buds on the upper part of the canes, but in many plantings still produced a crop, somewhat reduced, in 1956. Washington was killed back to ground level and Willamette was less severely injured; both varieties produced a good crop of new canes during the summer.

**Loganberries:** Canes killed back to ground level and plants made only a partial recovery by new growth from the crowns.

**Blackberries:** Evergreen and Thornless Evergreen were sev. damaged. Himalaya, locally an escape from cultivation, was killed to the crowns, but made good cane growth in the summer. Some plantings of Thornless Upright came through fairly well and matured a crop.

**Currants:** Commercial plantings came through in good shape. Heavy damage to fruit buds in most home gardens and, if borer injury was also present, whole canes were killed.

**Gooseberries:** Almost no damage occurred.

Blueberries: Little fruit bud damage and a heavy crop of fruit in 1956. However some of the 1955 canes in plantings on peat bog land died suddenly from June onward.

Cranberries: Some foliage burning occurred but no real injury.

### Tree Fruits

In general, nursery stock and young trees were very seriously damaged. Some fruit buds and occasional branches of established trees of cherry, peach, plum and apple (notably in Gravenstein) were killed. Pear and prune trees were less affected. During the summer whole trees of cherry and apples or large branches of peach and cherry trees died suddenly in home gardens in the Vancouver area.

### Vegetables

The estimated losses in tons for the different vegetables were as follows: potatoes 2000, carrots 1000, turnips 300, beets 100, cabbage 800, Brussels sprouts 125, beets 100; celery 100, broccoli 75 and cauliflower 40.

### Ornamentals

Rose: Almost complete loss of bushes in nurseries although there was some unexpected come-back. Heavy damage in home gardens and park plantings.

Cotoneaster, Hydrangea, Buddleia: Bushes killed to the ground in nurseries and home gardens but except for some cotoneasters sprouted again from the crowns in 1956.

Rhododendron, Azalea: Foliage badly burned and flower damage varied greatly. Some rhododendrons died suddenly in the summer.

Lilac, Forsythia, Weigela, Deutzia, Philadelphus: Sparse die-back of some flowering branches, extent depending greatly on the exposure.

Flowering Plum: Nursery stock was sev. injured but often only a few branches killed back in home gardens.

Cherry Laurel: Trees badly burned and some killed.

Border Perennials: Many plants were killed in home gardens and nurseries throughout the area.

Holly: A 50% loss of marketable branches occurred as a result of foliage discoloration and leaf-drop as well as some berry scorch. A normal crop is expected this fall.

Native Trees

Dogwood (Cornus nuttallii): Heavy loss in exposed locations. Also many trees in home gardens died during the summer after flowering normally this spring.

Maple (Acer macrophyllum): Considerable damage to branches and young trees.

Alder (Alnus rubra): Killing of young trees sev. in clearings.

Cedar, Hemlock, Pine: Considerable tip burning.

Miscellaneous

Hops: Some shoots stunted or killed in some hills in hop yards at Sardis.

Lawn Turf: Some damage and killing in patches occurred in home gardens; attributed in part to neglect in summer, to exposure and to varieties in the seed mixtures.

Pasture Grass used for Dehydration: About 1000 acres in the Sumas and Chilliwack areas were ploughed under and reseeded this year. (H. N. W. Toms).