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PROTECT TREES FROM MICE
IS WARNING TO ORCHARDISTS

September and October are the months when the far-sighted orchardist makes preparations to guard against possible injury to his trees by hungry field mice which gnaw the trunks and roots. Such injury is liable to occur at any time after November 1, although most of it usually is inflicted in mid-winter or very early in spring under cover of heavy snow and when the more favored food supply is running low, according to the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture.

That serious injury to orchard trees by mice occurs only at irregular intervals makes the menace the greater, for it usually catches the orchardist unprepared and wholly unaware of the damage being done until the melting snow in spring uncovers girdled trunks, or the wilting trees in mid-summer betray the hidden work of the mice on the roots.

Preventive measures cost little in comparison with the protection afforded, and although frequently a girdled tree may be saved by timely bridge grafting, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Many progressive fruit growers realize this truth and each fall and several times during the winter, examine their orchards carefully for mouse signs. If mice are present they prepare to destroy them or take steps to prevent their attacks upon trees.

Methods of preventing mouse injury vary according to the species of mouse and the cultural practices followed. In much of the eastern United States pine mice are present and their injury is usually inflicted below the surface of the ground. It is necessary to destroy such mice unless they are driven out by deep and clean cultivation of the whole orchard. Where meadow mice only are concerned, such methods as mechanical protectors and repellent washes are practicable, although the destruction of the mice is preferable.

General information relative to methods of coping with field mice is contained in Farmers' Bulletin 1397, "Mouse Control in Field and Orchard," and more specific information to meet questions not covered by the bulletin will be given to anyone describing details of their problems to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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