A lug box for picking and storing fruit

J. S. Bloomfield
A LUG BOX FOR PICKING AND STORING FRUIT

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PINE plantations in this State have now reached the stage when timber (mainly from thinnings) is becoming available for commercial usage, and this opens the way for the fruit industry to obtain suitable material for picking-boxes. For many years the kerosene case filled the need, but with the advent of bulk-handling of fuel this source of supply vanished. Unfortunately, in the intervening years the practice of using export boxes as picking containers, particularly in the apple districts, has become widespread. This has brought many difficulties in its wake and now that alternative boxes can be obtained it is felt that every endeavour should be made to eliminate this undesirable practice.

The type of lug box illustrated was used very successfully by one prominent fruit grower in the Hills last season and is considered ideal both for picking and the cool storage of loose fruit.

The lug box has the same internal dimensions as the dump case but is open on the side and is constructed of heavier timber. The end boards should be \( \frac{3}{8} \) in. thick and all side and bottom boards \( \frac{3}{4} \) in. thick. The bottom consists of closely-butted boards extending the full width of the case and providing sufficient overlap to protect the side boards which are butted on to them. Gaps should not be left between the boards as this could lead to damage to the fruit and also make the box less rigid.
An essential feature of the lug box is the provision of cleats attached to either end. These cleats are 1 1/4in. wide 3/4 in. thick and run the full width of the box. They should be firmly attached with processed nails and it is also an advantage for them to be wired on with a tie-wire passing around each end of the box and stapled to prevent slipping. They should be flush with the ends and in no instance should they protrude or be attached on the outside. Lifting is done mainly by means of the cleats and it is useful to have recessed finger holes in the ends to assist in this operation. The weight of the box constructed in pine as outlined is less than 10 lb.

For those interested in obtaining boxes of this type the necessary timber is as follows:

- **Ends**—14 1/4 x 9 x 3/8in.
- Each end (2 pieces)—14 1/4 x 4 1/2 x 3/8in. joined with corrugated fasteners.
- **Sides** (6 pieces)—19 1/4 x 3 x 3/8in.
- **Bottom** (5 pieces)—19 1/4 x 3 x 3/8in.
- **Cleats** (2 pieces)—15 1/4 x 1 1/2 x 3/8in. chamfered.

Box shooks will be available in Perth for the coming season and for growers wishing to purchase the boxes ready cut the cost will be approximately 4s. 9d. each.

The advantages of the lug box for use in picking and storing as against the dump case may be enumerated as follows:

1. The box is light, rigid and durable.
2. The wide opening readily allows the fruit to be transferred from the picking bag or bucket.
(3) Stacking is facilitated. The empty boxes readily nest in threes as illustrated, stacking in the orchard is simplified while they readily lend themselves to the use of pallets.

(4) The construction allows adequate ventilation.

Apart from the damage to the boxes themselves, the use of hardwood dump boxes for picking causes bruising because of the difficulty experienced in emptying fruit into the box from the picking bag. Lack of stability in stacking the cases is also a common cause of fruit bruising.

Fig. 6.—Lug boxes lend themselves readily to the use of pallets, and are ideal for stacking in the cool store as slats are not necessary

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