THE CALIFORNIA PRIVET AS AN ORNAMENTAL HEDGE PLANT.

Paper prepared by A. V. Clubbs, of Pensacola, Escambia County, Member of the Standing Committee on Ornamentals, and read by the Secretary.

[SEE MINUTES ON PAGE 4, ITEM 47.]

To the Members of the Florida State Horticultural Society:

Having been assigned a duty with the Committee on Ornamentals, I have thought best to give an outline of my practical experience with ornamental hedge plants, and will speak of the Ligustrum Californica, described by Henderson, as "a species of recent introduction," is a shrub remarkable for the beauty of its foliage. The leaf is considerably larger than that of the common Privet, of very dark, waxy green on the upper surface, and the under surface pea green. The plant is of rapid growth. Singly upon the lawn it is of great beauty, while its adaptation for a hedge is perfect." There are so many plants that are a success in the North, and prove failures in the South, that it gives me great pleasure in saying that eighteen years cultivation of this plant more than justifies the above description by Henderson.

Commencing with a single plant, from its cuttings I soon had plants by the thousand and beautiful hedges by the hundred yards. Grown singly and slightly trimmed annually to any desired form, it has abundance of white bloom in early spring, which is beautiful and very fragrant, and a choice food for the honey bee in its season. Closely trimmed, in a solid hedge, it rarely shows any bloom, but always presents a beautiful appearance with its evergreen foliage. On rare occasions the foliage is injured by exceptional frosts. The plant itself is never hurt by frost or insect, nor is it subject to dying out in spots, like some otherwise valuable hedge plants.

In preparing to plant a hedge with this plant, the soil should be well broken up with the plow, and a liberal quantity of well rotted stable manure thoroughly worked into the soil. Cuttings of the last season's growth, twelve inches long, may be planted in double rows, one foot apart each way. The cuttings should be of medium thickness, planted about eight inches in the ground, and planted before the spring growth commences. It would be well to plant some spare cuttings, that may be rooted at the same time, to take the place of any that should fail to grow. It is best to trim very closely for the first two years to cause the plants to branch near the ground. The plant being strictly ornamental, with no thorns, it must be protected from cattle, horses and goats. When grown singly, it should be thoroughly fertilized when planted, and annually trimmed to any shape or form desired. This trimming should be done when growth is checked by dry weather, about midsummer, so as not to destroy the bloom buds, which will mature later in the fall for spring blooming. To keep up a thrifty growth, some surface application of fertilizer should be applied as needed, from year to year, and with reasonable care, we may be sure of satisfactory results in all sections of Florida, and the South generally.