

## Fruit Varieties for the Roadside Market in Ontario, Canada\*

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Varieties are of importance in any planting, but when the grower is marketing his own crop at the roadside, the choice may influence his whole operation. Since the customer usually buys on appearance, size and attractiveness should be a major consideration. To encourage repeat sales quality must go along with appearance. Adaptability of varieties to local conditions, and their ability to produce commercial crops regularly could make the difference between profit and loss.

Varieties for special purposes may have a place on the roadside market. Good freezing varieties often can be featured, since they are not always available through regular channels. There are varieties with high quality that are too soft for shipping a distance that would attract customers.

Quality cannot be stressed too strongly. It should be possible to offer fruit much closer to maturity on roadside markets than in supermarkets. This is a distinct advantage in that the customer can come to the roadside market and purchase fruit of higher quality than is available anywhere else.

In experiments at the Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario a few years ago, it was shown that leaving fruit on the tree to optimum maturity increased the amount of fruit harvested. Optimum maturity did not mean full ripeness; but it was the stage of maturity which provided the optimum combination of size, attractiveness, edibility, shipping and keep-

ing qualities. The increase in size varied with the fruit. European plums increased the least, and peaches the most.

With Jubilee peaches — if there were 100 baskets of fruit on the trees 7 days before optimum maturity, there was a gain of 35 baskets of fruit by leaving the peaches on the tree the extra 7 days. Sweet cherries increased by 10 baskets, Shiro plums by 18, and Bartlett pears by 12. There was also more red color, more sugar and less acid in all fruits.

Thinning is extremely important for peaches, apples, pears and sometimes plums. There is no place for small low quality fruit, as it effects the price of the high quality fruit. Thinning can be done by hand or in some cases by chemical blossom thinning.

Some of the varieties of various fruits that should be considered for roadside market are as follows:

### Strawberries

The first fruit is the strawberry, and coming at the start of the tourist season, it can open the roadside market in Ontario. Redcoat is the most popular variety, because it is attractive and produces a good crop. However it is only fair quality, and has light internal color.

Veestar is earlier than Redcoat and has high color. Vibrant is also a day or two ahead of Redcoat, and has a very attractive red throughout its flesh. It could be featured as a freezing variety.

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Sparkle, Guardsman and Vesper are later varieties that would help to extend the season. Sparkle and Guardsman lose their size rather quickly. Vesper is large and attractive.

### Cherries

Sweet cherries are a very popular fruit for the roadside market. The first variety of any quality is Vista, a black fruit which ripens at the end of the first week in July in Ontario. Vista is followed by Venus, Bing, Vic and Hedelfingen, also black fruited. With cold storage, late varieties of sweet cherries can be kept well into August. Vega and Victor are two good white varieties.

### Red Raspberries

The red raspberry is a very perishable crop. The earliest variety is Gati-neau, ripening with Vista cherry. Creston is a variety from B.C. that is showing some promise. Newburgh is one of the main commercial varieties in Ontario. Of the newer varieties Bonanza from California has been the most productive at Vineland but may be somewhat cold tender.

Heritage is a new fall bearing variety from Geneva that is very interesting.

### Apricots

Although not a commercial crop at present in Ontario, this popular fruit could be an attraction on the roadside market. Goldcot, Alfred and Vee-cot are the three named varieties recommended for trial, and there are also several selections at Vineland showing promise. The season starts toward the end of July and lasts until the middle of August.

### Peaches

Many roadside markets feature peaches during the peak of the season. We now have a succession of varieties from the end of July until the end of September. Red skin varieties are usually the most popular, and some

varieties can be featured for freezing. The first variety to ripen is Erlyvee, and although small and soft, it could be useful to open the season. It is one of the best croppers at Simcoe. Earli-red is really the first red peach, but is some what tender in bud. Candor, a new variety from North Carolina, is a non-oxidizer, and looks interesting at Vineland. Garnet Beauty, Royalvee and Sunhaven are varieties ripening before the popular Redhaven. Har-belle, a new variety from Harrow, may also be worth a try for this season. To follow Redhaven we have Envoy, Velvet, Loring, Veteran, Van-ity, Madison and Redskin. Harmony and Cresthaven also may find a place in this season. Harmony, another new variety from Harrow, ripens with Lor-ing; and Cresthaven from Michigan ripens with Madison.

### Pears

There is not a great deal of choice in pear varieties. Giffard is the first to ripen, in early August. When picked at the right stage, it keeps well. It is followed about three weeks later by Clapp's Favorite, which is an attractive, large pear of good quality. It breaks down at the core if picked too mature. Bartlett, picked in early September, is the main pear variety. It could be conditioned for the Thanks-giving trade. Bosc is a good quality, late pear; but is probably too late to be of much value for the roadside market.

### Plums

In recent years plums have been picked so immature that poor quality has discouraged repeat sales. Picked at proper maturity plums could be a very popular fruit on the roadside. The season starts in late July with the Japanese variety, Early Golden. Other Japanese varieties are Methley, Shiro and Burbank. The first European variety to ripen is California Blue. It ripens in mid-September, and is a large blue variety, with fairly

good quality. Three new varieties introduced recently by the Horticultural Research Institute should prove very popular on the roadside market, since they have size, good eating quality and appearance. Valor ripens the last week in September, then comes Verity, 4 or 5 days later, followed by Vision early in October. The prune types, Stanley and Italian, or good processing varieties.

### Apples

There is a wide choice of apples for the roadside market. The season starts around the 1st of August, and good varieties are available throughout the season. The first variety is Close. It is not a good dessert apple, but makes fine sauce.

Quinte ripens about 10 days after Close, and a week to 10 days before Melba. Quinte is glossy but not bright red, has superior shelf life and dessert quality for its season.

There still may be some demand for a yellow apple in this season, and Yellow Transparent or Lodi may have a limited place. Melba is well known for quality, but is soft. The red strains are more desirable than the regular Melba. Puriton, ripening a day or two later than Melba, may be more desirable, because it has an attractive dark red color, and is easier to size. It has early bloom, which can be a hazard in some locations.

Scotia, ripening with Early McIntosh, is easy to size and a better dessert apple, but not as good a cooker. It has dark red color, and tends to crop regularly.

Tydemans' Red follows Scotia by ten days. It is hard to judge its maturity, because it colors early. It has been a light cropper at Vineland.

Paulared, a new variety from Hill-top Nurseries, in Michigan, may be the best variety between Tydemans' Red and McIntosh. It can be harvested in one or two pickings and has

a solid red blush with a bright ground color.

McIntosh is well known and hard to beat in its season.

Spartan, ripening a week later, has a firmer flesh and is easier to color. It needs thinning to attain size.

Empire, from New York, is a McIntosh type but firmer, darker in color, and has a longer shelf life than McIntosh.

On the roadside it may be possible to promote an apple for a special purpose. Mutsu is a large yellow apple that could be featured as a baking apple. Crabapples are of only limited commercial value, but they could be featured for making jelly. Dolgo is an early crab, and Hyslop is an old standard variety maturing in September.

### Grapes

There are many varieties of grapes that could be featured on the roadside market, starting in early September, and going on through until Thanksgiving.

Himrod is a white seedless ripening Sept. 1, and Seneca is a high quality grape maturing a week later, which holds its quality over a very long period, even up to frost. Buffalo could be featured as a dessert grape or for juice and wine. S9549 is hardy, a good producer, and is one that the home winemaker likes. It could replace some of the California wine varieties.

In summary—when growing fruit for the roadside market, choose varieties of high quality, attractive appearance and regular production. Pick at top maturity, and keep in cold storage when not on display.

Feature varieties for special uses and those that are not always readily available. In this way you will encourage repeat sales and draw customers from a greater distance. This will help make for a profitable venture.