

Hudson's Golden Gem Apple

LARRY L. McGRAW*

When I first saw a tree of the Hudson's Golden Gem apple, I passed it up as a Bosc pear, and did so for nearly a month. As the fruit grew in size, the golden undercolor gradually appeared. By now, I had become more interested, and inspected the fruit more closely. I was pleasantly surprised to find it to be an apple.

About this time, a friend, Milo Gibson, of Portland, Oregon, happened to mention to me that an apple of special merit had caught his eye. Milo was not satisfied that this find was his exclusively, and was searching for other trees of it around the state.

When I told him that I had found an apple that looks like a pear, we combined efforts in a search for trees and the source of the variety.

On one of his trips to Woodburn, Oregon, Milo picked up some helpful information from George Mitsch, a nurseryman, to the effect that his favorite apple was one called Golden Gem. George went out to his backyard orchard and brought back a russeted apple—the very one we were looking for.

Another year passed. We gathered very similar specimens from Mt. Tabor in Portland, Oregon; from Orient, Oregon; and from Sauvie's Island, on the Columbia River. We compared them, and concluded that they were all 'Hudson's Golden Gem'.

All traces of the Hudson's Nursery have disappeared. Some of the nurserymen near Albany, Oregon, had worked as children for the Hudsons, and remember the Hudson's Golden Gem.

The price of trees of Golden Gem in the early 1930's gives one some idea of the high regard that the originator had for this apple. When trees of most other varieties were selling for 50 cents each, Golden Gem was sold for \$2.00 to \$2.50.

My own feeling is that Hudson's Golden Gem is my finest eating apple at this time. I have tasted nearly 1,000 apple varieties over the past few years, and have concluded that this may very well be the best of the English and American Russets.

If the buying public could be educated into accepting a multi-colored or russeted apple, then this variety could become a major variety in the years to come.

My personal description of the Hudson's Golden Gem is as follows: Good, healthy, dark green, large, stiff, attractive foliage. When loaded with fruit, the golden russeted apples are most attractive against the dark green leaves. The trees seem to bear some fruit every year, and will literally rope the limbs with medium-sized fruit in the on-year. The fruit are large when the tree is thinned. The only fault that I have noted is that the fruit is so crisp in the early-ripe stage, that it will shatter when dropped on a hard surface. This is no problem if the fruit is properly handled. It will stay crisp and delicious for several months, if stored in a refrigerated, moist atmosphere. The apple seems to improve in storage until mushy, at which time it is still excellent eating with a spoon. The flesh turns brown very slowly, and makes a fruit salad that needs no sugar.

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