

The Laking Apple

B. J. E. TESKEY AND A. ZITNAK*

The following is from a letter dated December 12, 1925, to Mr. J. E. Carter, Esq., agricultural representative for Wellington County in the province of Ontario: "... your letter of December 7th is received; also the specimens of seedling apple from Mr. Chas. Laking, R.R. #3, Guelph, Ontario. I have tested and made a description of Mr. Laking's seedling:

"Size: medium; form roundish, slightly ribbed; cavity deep, open; stem medium length, moderately stout; basin deep, medium width, abrupt, smooth; calyx open; color pale yellow, well washed and splashed with deep orange red; predominant color deep red approaching crimson; seeds medium size, acute; dots moderately numerous, small, pale yellow, distinct; skin moderately thick, tender; flesh white, often tinged with red near skin, firm, crisp, tender, moderately juicy; core small; flavor subacid, sprightly, spicy; quality very good; season probably November to February."

"This apple might be a seedling of King. If it is hardier than King and keeps longer it should prove a valuable variety, and I am writing to Mr. Laking to get some further information about it."

"I am very pleased to have been sent the Laking apple as we seldom see new varieties as good as this. With best wishes for the Christmas season . . ."

The letter is signed by Dr. W. T. Macoun, at that time, Dominion Horticulturist, Canada Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Mr. Laking discovered the apple in his orchard near Guelph, growing in the fence line near to a King tree and a Northern Spy tree. The fruit shows many of the attributes of both King and Spy, and, indeed, may well be the offspring of these two high-quality varieties.

Mr. Laking made a number of grafts from the seedling, and, in time, had a couple of dozen "Laking" trees. It was soon found that the apples were ready to pick about mid-October, and that they would keep in a root-house storage nearly as well as Spy. It was also discovered that the fruit made excellent sauce and pies. The "Laking" apple became quite popular on the local market, and for many years was eagerly sought after by consumers in the area. Unfortunately, and we think underservedly, the apple never became known outside of the neighbourhood of its origin.

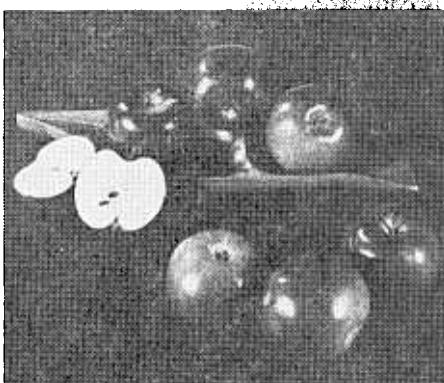


Fig. 1. 'Laking', an attractive, late apple, was first discovered in 1925, near Guelph, Ontario. In spite of many excellent qualities, it has remained unknown outside of the Guelph area.

*Both at the Department of Horticultural Science, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

It was in the early 50's, while we were visiting the Laking orchard, then operated by son John, that the "new" variety attracted our attention. That the fruit was outstandingly attractive, goes without saying; that the tree was sturdy, moderately vigorous and winter hardy, was obvious. At the University, we confirmed to our satisfaction the good culinary and keeping properties of this attractive apple.

In 1958 we grafted "Laking" to EMIX rootstocks, and planted it on a mediocre site in the College orchard. It has done very well as a dwarf. It has cropped well and evenly for 10 years. The color, size and quality of the fruit is very good; the general tree behaviour seems completely satisfactory. We experienced no trouble producing clean, sound fruit. In the meantime, apples stored in ordinary refrigerated storage kept well until April or longer—almost as well as Spy.

Satisfied that the tree performance on dwarfing roots was satisfactory, we have again conducted quality tests on the fruit. Here then is our assessment as compared with McIntosh, Northern Spy and Red Delicious.

Table 1. Chemical characteristics of fruit of the 'Laking' apple.

	pH	% Malic Acid	Soluble Solids
Laking	3.35	0.54	12.5
McIntosh	3.10	0.85	12.1
N. Spy	3.20	0.81	11.9
Delicious	3.65	0.24	11.3

The flesh of Laking is firm, opaque-white, and resists oxidative browning on exposure to air to the same extent or even greater than does Cortland. The flavor is sweet but distinctive. Slices remain firm and cohesive when cooked or baked. They produce an opaque-white sauce with a distinct, pleasing, flavor, good consistency, and moderately sweet. Because of its relatively low acidity and high sugar con-

tent, the sauce can be made without the addition of sugar.

The firmness of flesh and low browning potential make Laking apples suitable as fresh slices for salads and for frozen slices.

A new look at the old Laking reveals an apple with undoubted value as a variety for the home garden. And its potential as a commercial variety for a pick-your-own, farm market, or even for processing seems well worth exploring.

Apple Cultivars in Japan

Leading apple cultivars in Japan at the present time include 'Delicious' strains ('Richared' and 'Starking'), 'McIntosh', 'Golden Delicious', 'Fuji', 'Jonathan', as well as 'Mutzu', 'Megumi', 'Orei', and 'American Summer Pearmain'. Cultivars formerly planted include 'Winesap', 'Rome Beauty', 'Yellow Transparent', 'Oldenburg', 'Gravenstein', 'Wealthy', 'Winter Banana', 'Cortland', 'Red Astracan', 'Cox Orange', 'Rhode Island Greening', 'Grimes Golden', 'Baldwin', 'Esopus', 'Spitzenburg', 'Northern Spy', 'Ben Davis', 'York Imperial', 'Yellow Newtown', 'Stayman', 'Indo', and 'Ralls Janet'.

The apple growing region in the north of Honshu (chiefly Aomori, Iwate, Akita, and Yamagata prefectures) have many orchards 30 to 60 years old, of the cultivar, 'Ralls Janet', grown on *Malus prunifolia* (Willd.) Borkhausen rootstock. 'Ralls Janet' was introduced to Japan about 1880; but since 1945 it has declined in popularity and many abandoned orchards dot the countryside. Excellent results have been obtained in renewing these orchards by topworking to the new cultivar, 'Fuji', as well as 'Golden Delicious', with profitable returns obtained in relatively short periods of time.—*Eiiti Oguro*