'Jonamac', an Early Ripening 'McIntosh' Type Apple

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'Jonamac' (New York 44428-5) is a seedling of 'McIntosh' x 'Jonathan'. The cross was made at Geneva, N.Y. in 1944 and in 1955 this seedling was selected from a family of 2474 seedlings. After the tree and fruit performance had been observed in the orchard for 17 years, this new variety was introduced in 1972.

Tree. 'Jonamac' trees grow somewhat less virogously than 'McIntosh'. This smaller tree size makes it very desirable for close orchard spacing and easy harvest. Fruits are borne mainly on spurs. Branch terminals are less drooping than those of its 'Jonathan' parent. Leaves and fruits are not resistant to insects and diseases which attack apple.

Pollination. 'Jonamac' is diploid; controlled pollination tests show that its pollen is viable and capable of pollinating other varieties. Thirteen years of bloom records show that it is an early bloomer, the average bloom date at Geneva, N.Y. being May 17, about the same as 'McIntosh'. It will satisfactorily serve as the pollen source for early blooming varieties, including 'Idared', 'McIntosh', 'Puritan', 'Lodi', and others.

Fruit. 'Jonamac' fruits are similar to 'McIntosh' except they have better color, better eating quality, and they ripen more than a week before 'McIntosh'. 'Jonamac' ripens an average of 8 days before 'McIntosh'. Commercial apple growers have long been searching for a 'McIntosh' type which ripens before 'McIntosh' so that advantage can be taken of the early market demand, without marketing immature 'McIntosh'. 'Jonamac' could be just the variety to fill this need. The fruit size is medium, about 2¾ inches in diameter; fruit sizes are uncommonly uniform. The skin color resembles 'McIntosh' but it is a darker, more attractive red with a greater portion of the surface colored. The waxy bloom on the skin is heavy. The flesh texture is semifirm, similar to 'McIntosh'; fruits bruise easily. The flesh is nearly white. The flavor is subacid with very good eating quality.

Yields. Trees of 'Jonamac' are annually productive. They are precocious, bearing a measurable crop in their third year after planting. 'Jonamac' yields are about equal to those of 'McIntosh'. The cumulative per-tree yield of 15-yr-old 'Jonamac'/M.7, average of 4 trees, was 38.5 bu., while that of 4 comparable trees of 'McIntosh'/M.7 was 40.0 bu. per tree. Yield records on individual trees showed that 'Jonamac' produces good crops annually, with little tendency for biennial cropping. However, blossom thinning is sometimes desirable to prevent overcropping and small fruits. At harvest time, fruits of 'Jonamac' hang to the tree much better than 'McIntosh' and stop-drop sprays are rarely needed.

Storage. The storage life of 'Jonamac' and 'McIntosh' at 31°F. was compared in eleven seasons. 'Jonamac' had a storage life of about 120 days, which ranks it as a fairly good keeper, slightly better than 'McIntosh'. However, because 'Jonamac' is harvested before 'McIntosh', it is generally marketed early and is rarely held in storage for extended periods.

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'Jonamac'

Commercial Usefulness. Several commercial apple growers were so impressed with 'Jonamac' that they each planted a few acres of it, even before it was introduced. We are offering 'Jonamac' as a 'McIntosh' type, ripening 8 days earlier and having better skin color and better eating quality. Its greatest usefulness is expected to be as a replacement for the immature 'McIntosh' which are often harvested before they are fully ripe in anticipation of capturing the high prices of the early market. 'Jonamac' will be useful both for the home gardener and for the commercial apple grower.

Further details about the performance of 'Jonamac' are described in New York's Food and Life Sciences Bulletin 25, "'Jonamac', a new apple from Geneva".

Nursery trees of 'Jonamac' can be purchased from the New York State Fruit Testing Association, Geneva, N.Y. 14456.