

Variety Notes On Western Fruit Growing Regions

By Stanley Johnston

Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station,
South Haven, Michigan

Last fall it was my privilege to visit most of the important fruit growing regions in the West. The following are a few variety notes taken on the trip.

The first stop was at the Iowa State College. The value of Virginia Crab and Hibernial as hardy rootstocks was clearly demonstrated in the college orchard where trees worked on these stocks withstood the severe Armistice Day freeze of 1941, and are in good condition, while trees worked on common apple stocks were killed.

The Stanley plum was bearing a fine crop at Ames. This new plum continues to make an excellent record in many places.

Peaches

Elberta is the leading freestone peach variety in practically all western areas. It was a surprise at Grand Junction, Colorado, to find growers picking Salwey, a very late maturing variety, formerly grown rather extensively in Michigan.

The J. H. Hale peach has been losing favor in most parts of the country, but I found it very popular for the gift package business that has become so important at Medford, Oregon.

Veteran, a peach variety originating at the Vineland, Ontario, Experiment Station, is well liked in British Columbia, and in Western Oregon and Washington. The reason for its popularity is its ability to set fruit in cold, wet spring weather, which is quite prevalent in that region. Redhaven seems to be doing well there. The demand for early peaches is limited as the principal market is for processing.

Washington canners have been putting out a very high grade pack of tree-ripened Elberta peaches, and this industry will probably expand.

Apples

Delicious has been planted very heavily in the Northwest in recent years. Some wonder if it has not been too heavily planted. It is strictly a dessert variety, not suitable for processing, which restricts its range of usefulness. Golden Delicious is increasing in popularity.

A new McIntosh-type variety named Spartan, which originated at the Summerland Experiment Station, in British Columbia, looks promising and should be widely tested in northern and eastern United States.

Pears and Cherries

Bartlett still reigns supreme among pear varieties. Bosc is losing in pop-

ularity in the Northwest. Comice is increasing in popularity as a winter pear, especially near Medford, Oregon, where this variety is well liked in gift packages. It is large, attractive, and of reasonably good flavor. The winter pear industry has been hurt by the lack of export trade.

There has been no change of im-

portance in sweet cherry varieties in the Northwest, except that the trend has been toward the dark kinds. Light colored sweet varieties have declined in popularity in most parts of the country.

Strawberries and Raspberries

Marshall is the principal strawberry variety of the West and is highly prized because of its excellent qualifications for processing. Unfortunately, this variety is badly infected with yellow virus which is resulting in lower yields. Plant breeding programs are under way in Washington and Oregon in an attempt to find new varieties of the Marshall type that will be immune or highly resistant to the yellow virus disease.

The Washington red raspberry is the principal red variety in the Northwest. It is excellent in that locality for fresh use and freezing. However, it crumbles in the canning process. Cuthbert is grown extensively in the Willamette Valley for fresh market and processing. Willamette, a variety originating from breeding work at Oregon State College, is showing promise in Oregon.

Few black raspberries are grown in Washington, although Oregon has 2,095 acres according to the 1945 census. Munger is the principal variety, with Plum Farmer in second position. Cumberland, so popular in the Middlewest and East, does not do well in Oregon.



Did you say high yields? This old Bartlett pear tree on the Peter Broe farm near Fennille, Michigan, has produced 56 bushels of fruit in one year.