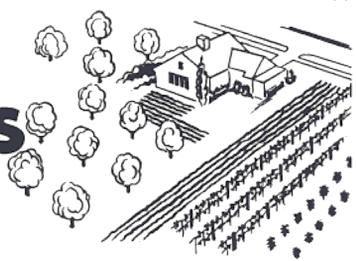




FRUIT GARDENS



Selecting Eastern Black Walnut Varieties

By J. C. McDaniel,
Tenn. Department of Agriculture
Nashville 3, Tennessee

Interest in named varieties of the eastern black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), is principally among home owners who plant them for combination shade and nut trees. Let's look at varieties as discussed recently by some testers in the Northern Nut Growers Association, Inc.

Thomas, the oldest variety, has been the most extensively planted. North of central Ohio and Illinois, the Ohio variety which seems more winter hardy and earlier maturing, and has generally been preferred. With these two as standards, some new and old varieties are appraised below for various sections.

Professor Frank B. Cross, Oklahoma A. & M. College: "The Thomas variety has been planted more extensively in Oklahoma than any other. It has many good points and is doing well wherever soil conditions are favorable, particularly in a deep, sandy loam, fertile type

of soil. It comes into production early, bears heavy crops, and the walnuts are of good size and quality. However, we find when soil conditions are not favorable the kernels are quite apt to be shrivelled. In several instances I have seen practically a whole crop almost worthless. The heavy production of the tree apparently is, in that case, a disadvantage. This trouble develops on heavy soils, particularly soils with a hard clay subsoil."

"There are several other varieties which have a high kernel percentage and which seem to be preferable to the Thomas in our variety tests located at Stillwater, at the Oklahoma Experiment Station. Ogden, Cooper, and Stambaugh are three varieties which especially appeared to be superior during recent years. They have a high kernel percentage, crack well, hull well, and bear well. In fact, in this limited test, they have outyielded the Thomas and there has never been any tendency toward shrivelling of the kernels. The Ogden is probably too late for areas north of Oklahoma, but in my estimation it is

about the best variety of the whole group."

H. F. Stoke, Roanoke, Virginia: "I hardly believe I am qualified to name the three or four black walnuts best adapted to this territory. Creitz should be on the list. So too, should be Thomas, except for that bark disease, *Nectria canker*, to which it is subject. I am going to lose a twenty-year-old Thomas in my back yard from this cause. Creitz bears regularly and well. The nut is very much like Ohio but the husk is thin and it cleans much better."

"Homeland, a local variety, would be first on my personal list. It has made a poor record in Oklahoma, the only other place I know of its being tested, and besides, it is not listed by any nursery. It fills out much better than Thomas. I have tried a number of other varieties, but have not been greatly impressed. Sifford, a fine local nut, has been a very unreliable producer. Stabler is worthless here."

Dr. R. T. Dunstan, Greensboro, North Carolina: "Stambaugh* has proved a disappointment on two counts—its husk is extremely heavy, mushy and badly infested with maggots and the kernel cavity leaves much to be desired. Otherwise, it would be splendid. Vail appears to be very good except in cracking quality, the fault being due to excessive plumpness of kernel. Qual-

ity of kernel is excellent—very bright and sweet. Templeton is very slow to begin bearing. Stabler I should say is practically worthless, though it has borne a few nuts, the greater portion of which were one-lobed, allowing the kernels to be cracked out in one piece."

"Harney also has been disappointing because of two points; it has dropped most of its crop three years in succession in August, and its kernel cavity has proved to be very small and poorly formed."

"Horton falls in the same category of practical worthlessness, the cavity being very small and ill-shaped. Brown is a very vigorous grower and a consistent bearer and the nuts are good on the whole. It does not husk too well, however, and kernel quality seems to me not quite as rich as desirable. Victoria and Sparrow both show considerable promise, but it is as yet too early to judge either."

"Homeland, though not a heavy bearer, is very consistent. Nuts are of good size, husk easily and clean and the quality is superb. It is among the latest to begin growth in spring, a strong point in its favor here where late spring frosts are so prevalent. Its one fault is that it is not too excellent a cracker, that is, with a hammer. I have not tested it in a mechanical cracker. Mr. Stoke's description of it as a variety for home use, rather than a commercial sort seems to me very apt."

"The Eureka is probably now at the head of the list with me. Thus far it appears to have to a high degree just

* There is a spurious Stambaugh, tracing back to a propagation from another tree standing near the original Stambaugh. Some reports of poor performance of this variety may not actually refer to the true Stambaugh.—J. C. McD.

about every good quality a black walnut should have, with the least faults. It has great vigor and good foliage, hanging late, and the tree is among the first to begin growth. It is enormously productive. The nut husks clean and the husk is of moderate thickness. Cracking quality is excellent. The kernel is large and thick (31.5%) and quality is good."

"Pellicle is a trifle on the dark side."

"There are two others which, on the basis of two seasons bearing, seem to me to offer promise of worth. They are Sellman and Elmer Myers. If they continue to measure up to their first performance, they will be high on the list."

From O'Fallon, Illinois, (near St. Louis) the late Joseph Gerardi reported in 1943: "In this section I would still plant Stambaugh for its cracking and bearing qualities and its thin shell. Its flavor however, does not equal that of Thomas and Mintle. The Mintle is smaller but a much better cracker than Thomas. It is also a young and heavy bearer, grows fast and straight and grafts easily."

Gilbert L. Smith, Wassaic, (Dutchess County), New York, reports that in repeated "taste tests" at his location, kernels of Sparrow were liked best, Snyder second, and Thomas always last. Sparrow, he says "surpasses Thomas in everything except size of nut and cracking quality" and is about equal in cracking quality. Sparrow and Snyder, at Wassaic, both ripen fully two weeks ahead of Thomas and retain their fol-



Black walnut makes an ideal combination nut and ornamental tree. This 8-year old Thomas has been producing nut crops for three years. In addition, it has enhanced the beauty of the lawn and provided welcome shade. (Anderson County, Tennessee.) Photo by Spencer B. Chase, courtesy Tennessee Valley Authority.

iage until hard frost, "while Thomas will be nearly bare . . . for some time before its nuts are ripe." While Snyder is slow in growth, "it bears young and consistently." Stambaugh, at Wassaic, matures well only in the longest seasons.

