

The Spotlight Peach in British Columbia

A. J. MANN* AND F. W. L. KEANE**

Summerland, B. C., Canada

THE Spotlight peach is a cross of Veteran x Rochester, originated at the Experimental Station, Summerland. The cross was made in 1934 by J. E. Britton, and the original tree was planted in April, 1937. The selection was made in 1940 by A. J. Mann, introduced in 1946, and named in November of that year.

In tree, in fruit bud and in blossom, Spotlight has been one of the hardiest peach varieties under test, being in all these respects equal to Veteran. In fruit bud, Spotlight has been harder than Redhaven.

Spotlight, particularly when young, tends to a somewhat tall and upright shape, in contrast to Redhaven, which tends to be roundish. The variety bears heavily and requires heavy thinning. The blossoms are large and light pink.

The fruit is large to medium in size and roundish in shape. When mature it has a rich orange-yellow ground color splashed with attractive red. It is yellow-fleshed, firm, good to above fair in quality. It has a smoother skin than peaches of Rochester type. It is semi-freestone, being somewhat similar to Rochester in this respect. Spotlight attains high color on the tree while still firm and should not be picked until good color has developed. As a canning variety Spotlight is satisfactory.

Spotlight matures about a week earlier than Rochester and about the same time as Redhaven. The entire

crop can be harvested in two or three pickings.

Since Spotlight is a competitor of Redhaven in season, it is necessary to compare the two varieties. The fruit of Redhaven is more highly colored, although Spotlight is also attractive. Redhaven is slightly the firmer of the two varieties, but in some seasons Spotlight has a slight advantage in sweetness and in quality when eaten fresh. The two varieties are fairly similar in canning quality but Spotlight is slightly superior in this respect. In some seasons Redhaven has shown a tendency for some fruits to be slab-sided, whereas Spotlight has maintained satisfactory shape from year to year.

There is a demand for a variety earlier than Rochester, easier to harvest commercially, of more attractive appearance and suitable for canning. Both Spotlight and Redhaven fulfill these conditions, and as it is uncertain which will eventually prove the more suitable, it was considered advisable to introduce Spotlight to the industry.

Spotlight appears promising, particularly for its firmness and bud hardiness, and it is being planted for limited commercial trial in the peach districts of British Columbia.

Spotlight is not patented or trademarked and its propagation is not restricted in any way. Consequently nurserymen are free to use this name on their labels and in their catalogues.

*Retired Horticulturist, Summerland Experimental Station, Canada Department of Agriculture.

**On leave from Summerland Experimental Station.