

## TWO NEW PEACHES FOR CALIFORNIA

By Grant Merrill

This past year two new peach varieties were introduced as a result of the breeding work conducted on the Grant Merrill fruit farms. These new peaches are **Merrill Gem**, plant patent No. 868, and **Merrill Beauty**, plant patent applied for. These were bred for California conditions.

As a result of many years of experience in fruit production, and considerable correspondence with other growers and research workers, it appear that new varieties for California should have higher color. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, we grow peaches on rich bottom land soil where growth is luxuriant. These trees receive large quantities of nitrogen fertilizer or are heavily pruned. This means that peach varieties which color well on the rolling hills typical of peach sections in the eastern states show very little color in California. Another reason why we need high color—and also large size, on fruits which are shipped from California, is that we must pay heavy freight charges to eastern markets and the only way we can compete is with larger better colored peaches.

### Merrill Gem

The Merrill Gem as grown in California is red almost all over and is very large. Its season is about that of the Red Bird or possibly a few days earlier. Since it is quite firm it fills all

the needs of a very early shipping peach under California conditions.

The Merrill Gem resembles the Red Bird in many respects, except that it has a yellow flesh and has almost no split pits. Under California conditions Red Birds split very badly. The flesh is intermediate in texture between Red Bird and J. H. Hale being quite crisp when first picked from the tree, even when with nearly full sugar.

This peach was produced by crossing J. H. Hale with Red Bird and then planting the open pollinated seeds of the best of the resulting seedlings.

### Merrill Beauty

The Merrill Beauty more nearly resembles J. H. Hale than any other peach. It was produced by planting a J. H. Hale seed from a tree growing next to a peach variety test block. The tree which developed from this seed appears to be a J. H. Hale x Arp cross because the fruit of it and many of its seedlings resembles Arp. Seeds from fruit of this original tree were planted and the best seedling to develop was the Merrill Beauty. It ripened commercially in Red Bluff this year, 46 days ahead of Elberta which would put it a little ahead of Arp.

It should be mentioned here that it takes more days to mature a variety in California than in eastern states, probably because of the cooler nights. However, the Merrill Beauty was picked commercially 13 days ahead of Redhaven, which in turn ripened 13 days

ahead of July Elberta which ripened 21 days ahead of Elberta.

The Merrill Beauty, although highly colored, has not as much color as the Merrill Gem, being about half covered with a red blush. The fruit is completely freestone when soft ripe, but clings to the pit somewhat when firm ripe.

A relatively high sugar content is developed when the fruit is quite green so it can be picked when very green to ripen into a very fine peach. This quality will make it very valuable for eastern shipment out of California.

The trees of both the Merrill Gem and Merrill Beauty are among the largest of the trees in my young orchard.



## BLUEBERRY VARIETIES FOR MASSACHUSETTS

John S. Bailey

Massachusetts Agricultural  
Experiment Station

Rubel is still the most widely planted variety in Massachusetts. Its popularity is based on its heavy and consistent cropping, its freedom from insect and disease troubles, its resistance to winter injury, and its long fruiting season. Late ripening Rubel berries, even though they are small, often bring the best price of the season because they don't have to compete with other blueberries.

Pioneer is a popular variety in the Cape Cod section where it produces heavy crops of large, attractive, fine flavored fruit and is quite winter hardy. It hasn't performed so well in other sections of the state at higher elevations and in heavier soils. In the

latter areas Concord performs better.

Concord is a vigorous grower and a



Rubel, the most widely planted blueberry in Massachusetts.