Van and Sam Cherries in Central Washington*

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The superior hardiness shown by Van and Sam trees as compared with other sweet cherries in Washington State following low temperatures in the fall and winter of 1955–56, has stimulated considerable interest in these varieties. Temperatures of zero or a few degrees below in mid-November caught many of the cherry trees in an immature state and severely damaged spurs, trunks, crotches and terminals of trees under 15 years of age and also old devitalized trees. Additional damage apparently resulted in February when temperatures as low as −12° F. occurred.

Bing, the leading sweet cherry variety in the Pacific Northwest, lacks sufficient hardiness to withstand the occasional severe low temperatures encountered. Lambert has shown less damage than Bing in test winters, but is not entirely hardy. Napoleon (Royal Ann) is very susceptible to winter damage.

In comparison with these three standard varieties and others in a 9-year-old variety planting at the Irrigation Experiment Station near Prosser, Wash., the superior appearance of Van following very low temperatures was striking. Although some spurs were damaged and there was some browning of tissues, there was no die-back. The trees displayed moderate bloom and almost full crops in 1956. Ripening appeared to be normal and the trees made excellent terminal growth.

Sam appeared next in hardiness to Van. It showed more tissue browning than Van did and considerable spur loss, but no terminal die-back. It bloomed sparsely and produced a light crop.

Only Black Republican, among about 20 varieties in the planting, approached these two British Columbia introductions in appearance by the time leaves were fully expanded. Lambert trees of the same age made good recovery following considerable terminal die-back and loss of nearly all the spurs. Bing trees were killed-back to three- or four-year-old wood and produced practically no fruit. However, the trees made good recovery generally. Napoleon trees were killed back to the trunk or lower part of the scaffold limbs but there was new growth from these tissues.

Young trees of Van, planted rather extensively as pollenizers in central Washington, were conspicuous after the leaves expanded because they showed little injury among severely damaged trees of standard varieties. These young trees showed more damage than did the older trees in the station plantings, but they contrasted strikingly with standard varieties of comparable age.

Both Van and Sam are excellent pollenizers for the Bing-Lambert-Napoleon group of varieties, and have been suggested for planting in preference to other pollenizers. In colder locations, Van or Sam might be used as main varieties if they prove acceptable in market outlets. Apparently both Bing and Lambert would serve as good pollenizers for Van or Sam.

Of the varieties tested, Van and

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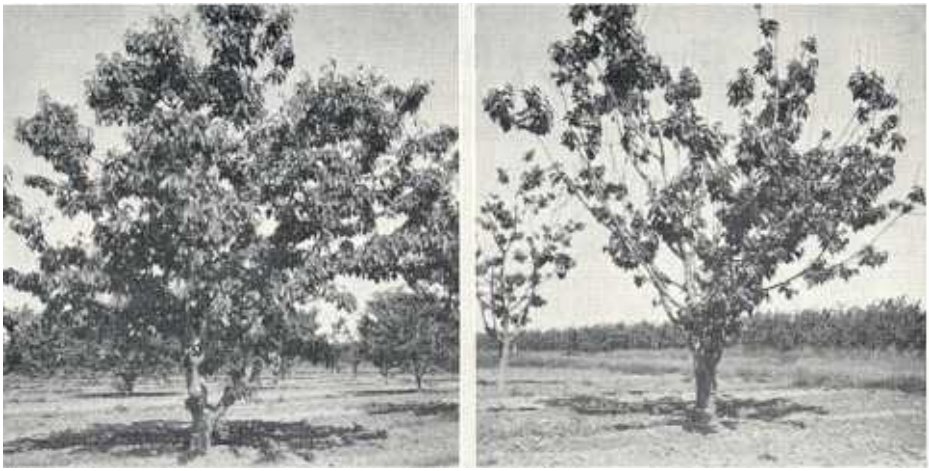

Fig. 1. **Van and Bing sweet cherry trees as they appeared at Prosser, Washington in May, 1956, following temperatures of zero in mid-November, 1955 and −6° F. in February, 1956. Note relative freedom from any signs of winter injury on Van (left) and the severity of the damage suffered by the Bing tree (right).**

Sam appear to best combine good pollenization characteristics for the Bing group of varieties with commercially desirable tree and fruit characteristics. When canned, both varieties have acceptable flavor. The relatively short fruit stems of Van make picking more difficult when the trees are heavily loaded, but some advantages of Van are productiveness, early-bearing, attractive lustrous appearance and apparent resistance to cracking of the fruit. Sam resembles an early Lambert in fruit appearance except it has a dark mahogany color resembling Bing.

Higgins—A New Muscadine Grape

The Higgins Muscadine grape was developed by the Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station, Experiment, Georgia. It is a cross between a white male pollinator and Yuga, a pistillate variety, and was named in honor of Dr. B. B. Higgins, who was head of the Georgia Experiment Station's Botany Department for 42 years.

This new muscadine grape variety was first designated as Georgia No. 3. It is not self fertile and requires a pollinator. The vine is moderately vigorous, and the foliage has been relatively resistant to diseases. It is a midseason variety ripening a few days earlier than Hunt. The bronze fruit, borne in compact clusters, has a skin that is moderately thick yet tender. The pulp is soft, and the flavor is good. The individual berries are of very large size.

The Higgins is considered worthy of introduction because of its excellent fruit size, large compact clusters, outstanding yields, and moderate resistance to black rot. Sources of supply of these plants can be obtained by writing B. O. Fry, Department of Horticulture, Georgia Experiment Station, Experiment, Georgia.