

Reprinting of Historical Fruit Book

The Fruit Grower's Hand Book

BY WILLIAM G. WARING

First Published in 1851; Reprinted in 1994

This historical book is subtitled "A Concise Manual of Directions for the Selection and Culture of the Best Hardy Fruits in the Garden or Orchard." It includes a descriptive list of the most approved and popular varieties of hardy fruits in 1851 which could be grown for enjoyment throughout the season: apples, apricots, berries, cherries, cranberries, currants, gooseberries, grapes, mulberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, quinces, raspberries, strawberries; and various nuts and rhubarb. Each fruit is introduced by a general description of its group, including drawings of fruit forms, and their uses and culture.

Some apples still known today are: Baldwin, Benoni, Gravenstein, Jonathan, Newtown Pippin, Rambo, Rhode Island Greening, Smokehouse, Northern Spy, Wagener, and Winesap.

The second part of the book is devoted to "How, When, And Where To Plant," and includes "general rules for the successful and economical culture of fruit trees and plants, with reasons and directions for their intelligent application, under varying conditions and circumstances." He considers the root, stem and branches, leaves, flowers, fruit, soil, manures, situation (site), selection of trees, orchard arrangement, transplanting, pruning and

training, propagation, and a calendar of operations. A glossary contains horticultural terms used in the book.

Of interest is a reference to dwarf trees: "Most kinds of fruit trees can be made dwarfish and fruitful, either by working on slow growing stocks, or by rigorous root-pruning and summer pinching. Large heavy fruits, liable to be blown from standards, can be grown successfully as dwarfs."

On the last page, Waring advertises his Centre Nurseries in Tyrone (Blair County) and in Boalsburg (Centre County), Pennsylvania. He served as the first principal of the Farmers' High School, which later became the Pennsylvania State University.

This little 4 by 6 inch book of 135 pages was printed in 1851 by Lutz & Scheffer, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It will be of great interest to all those who enjoy growing and eating fruits. Its facsimile reproduction in 1994 will make this classic generally available again.

The Fruit Grower's Hand Book is available from the Centre County Historical Society for \$15.25, postage included. Send check or money order to C.C.H.S. Publications, Centre Furnace Mansion, 1001 E. College Ave., State College, PA 16801.

Reviewed by Dr. Loren D. Tukey, Professor Emeritus of Pomology, Pennsylvania State University.