

— FRUIT GARDENS —

Some Variety Tests in Central Maine

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Plums

In more than 150 varieties of plums I have tested for home use, Date Prune (Coates) and American Mirabelle stand highest of all. Italian Prune and, to a less extent, German Prune are tender. Grafted onto seedling plumcherries the Italian mostly froze out two years ago, but on Winnipeg, like Burton, it came through. I think if one had for understock either Northern, Bounty or Assiniboine, and porcupine-grafted them (scions stuck into sides of branches) all of the prune type and especially Imperial Epineuse would thrive readily.

Date Prune (Coates is the name in Oregon nurseries) is a seedling of French Improved. It may split in wet seasons but it keeps its shape in cooking, which no other variety here does. It is very luscious, even raw. Good spraying (with parathion) for curculio and with lime-sulfur for black knot is needed.

Here winter temperature goes to 25 and rarely to 35 degrees below zero F. Last winter (1948-49) was mild and most freeze-outs recovered wonderfully. Still I would look to Northern as understock for prune type plums. It

is the earliest of the horse plum (*Prunus nigra*) selections, which are available from the Morden Nursery, Morden, Manitoba.

Pears and Peaches

In pears, we prefer Beierschmitt (a seedling of Bartlett from Iowa) to any tried. Peaches freeze out with us but a seedling brought from Bohemia to Iowa will live and thrive, though a bit late in ripening. A yellow one a month earlier is being brought out. All are small but sweet.

Grapes

Erie, though dropped at Geneva as self-sterile, is by far the best quality to date of the Concord type here, and the earliest. The University of New Hampshire is raising many seedlings of Erie to get a perfect pollinating type. In grapes of Minnesota breeding, No. 78 is the best one tried, but nearly too small. In colder areas, burying grape vines insures many kinds you cannot otherwise raise, though they are far better than any common labruscas in any area in the North. They bury Eurle 9 (August 15th) at the Ottawa station. I have yet tried no sweeter and more delicious variety. Eurle 9 was brought from Bulgaria.