

A Missouri Apple from the Fruit Experiment Station, Mountain Grove, Missouri:

WHETSTONE (Conard x Delicious)

By PAUL H. SHEPARD

(Picture on front cover)

During the past three seasons a considerable number of Whetstone trial plantings by fruit growers in several states have come into bearing. Those growers have gained some idea as to the worth of the variety when compared in the field with other varieties. In most cases they are planting more Whetstones, because of features they like, such as: early cropping, red color, very large size, tendency to grow clean, and ease of selling. In addition to the large size of the fruit, the stems, leaves and twigs are large, something like the Duchess twig and leaf growth. Whetstone is a winter apple and can be harvested later than almost all other varieties if desired, as it naturally hangs on the tree without the use of hormone sprays.

It bears on spurs all along the scaffold limbs, as is often seen on McIntosh. There is no tendency toward biennial cropping on the original tree, now 36 years old. The quality of the fruit might be called fair to good. It is not as good as Delicious or Jonathan, but is better than Rome, York

and other varieties of that class. Growers like its eye appeal and buyers, especially bulk truck buyers, express a preference for that variety, once they have tried it. The fruit keeps as well as Winesap in cold storage, but tends to become mealy in the spring months. Its waxy finish makes it a good common storage apple.

The fruit is well-colored, long conic in shape, slightly knobbed, and uniform in size. The tree is vigorous, spreading, and needs little corrective pruning, as most budding water sprouts seem to turn into fruiting spurs.

Wabash Valley Note on Whetstone Apple.—We have this variety just coming into bearing, 1949 season being the first from the young trees. We have found that it is inclined to break down from the center as it begins to ripen. Otherwise it is a beautiful apple . . . We sold about all we packed last season to the Consolidated Fruit Company of Nashville.—L. B. McDonald, President, Knox Nursery and Orchard Company, Inc., Vincennes, Indiana.

(Consolidated Fruit reports that the Whetstone sold readily for them.—Ed.)