

Highbush Blueberries in Western Nova Scotia

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Western Nova Scotia is one of the few regions in Canada where the highbush blueberry can be grown, the wild highbush, *Vaccinium corymbosum*, being plentiful in the three western counties. The Experimental Farm at Kentville is somewhat beyond this native habitat and only one volunteer plant in the local area, apparently an escape from the Experimental Station plots, has come to the attention of this writer. The original planting at Kentville, made in 1926, is still vigorous and productive, and by bearing crops consistently during the intervening period of thirty-one years without one general crop failure, has demonstrated the suitability of the crop to the region.

This old block contains the varieties Adams, Grover, Greenfields, Harding, Katherine, Pioneer, Rancocas and Sam. Cultural tests showed the value of sawdust mulch and the entire planting received a fall application three inches deep late in the fall of 1940. Two subsequent sawdust applications have been made. In the early years clean cultivation was practiced, and after the sawdust was applied necessary cultivation was continued to control couch grass, Canada thistle, and other weeds. During this period of clean cultivation, Grover suffered severe twig injury about three years out of five. So great was this winter damage that serious consideration was given to grubbing out the entire row. Before this was done, however, a slight change was made in the cultural methods and annual weeds were permitted to grow after late July. This natural cover crop looks rather untidy

to visitors, but by using the moisture and plant food during the fall, has checked the new growth, and has hardened off the plants so that winter killing is no longer a problem. On several occasions including the winter of 1956-57 frost has damaged buds and twigs on peach trees and cherries but blueberries have been uninjured.

Yields of 17 or 18 quarts have been gathered from single plants of Adams, Rancocas and Pioneer, the all time record at Kentville being 24 quarts in 1956 from one Pioneer bush of shoulder height. Due perhaps to comparative isolation, neither fungicide nor insecticide has been needed. In some years birds have been a nuisance. Although not a complete remedy, the most effective protectant has been a light board, suspended from a sloping pole above the bushes to which fragments of broken mirror are tacked. On any but the dullest days, light is flashed in all directions as the board carrying the bits of mirror sways in the wind.

Nearly all the varieties known in New Jersey have been fruited at Kentville and their performance agrees very closely with reports from that state. The season in Nova Scotia is later and shorter, however, and berries which do not ripen by September 10 sometimes remain undeveloped. August is blueberry month at Kentville, with Earliblue and Rancocas occasionally being spot picked the last week in July. Burlington seems to be about as late a variety as will be certain of ripening, and so far Coville has been rather acid even after the berries were fully blue. Berkeley is

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very vigorous and productive, but the berries are too soft for any but local sales. Bluecrop and Blueray are big, firm and attractive fruits. Herbert and Ivanhoe set a full crop of fruit but are a bit dark in color.

The unique feature of the highbush blueberry is its durability, both on the bush and off. True, some varieties, as Rancocas, may crack in extremely wet weather, but otherwise little loss results from a few days delay at harvest. Those varieties which normally pick without tearing retain their firmness at room temperature for many days and have been shipped by common carrier a thousand miles with several days of store life on the other end.

Since highbush and native lowbush blueberries are plentiful at the same season, a three year marketing study was made which showed that a pint of cultivated highbush berries sold in local markets for roughly the same price as a quart of lowbush berries. The latter are, however, more perishable, but each finds ready consumer acceptance.



Quality-First Peaches

There are some high quality peach varieties that we grow in the South just for people who simply demand highest quality, regardless of ripening season. We can't pass up white-fruited varieties in this category, for we now have several in addition to Raritan Rose, which is about as high in quality as peaches can get. I refer to Nectar, Belle of Georgia and Laterose.

Some growers up in Kentucky told me recently they were enthusiastic about Laterose. Nectar, previously a California peach whose patent has just run out, is a new variety to most of us, although it is over 17 years old. It ripens about 2½ weeks ahead of Elberta. Although slightly soft in flesh, it is large and has color an artist would

choose for painting and a flavor any hostess with pride in her cooking would choose for "special" company. It is canned in California as large halves for a special trade. And among yellow varieties, none rates higher in quality than Sunhigh, where it grows well, ripening two weeks before Elberta.—*John T. Bregger, Clemson, South Carolina.*



Grapes in Texas

The primary problem facing those who wish to grow grapes in Texas is to find a rootstock which will survive in soils infested with cotton root-rot (*Phymatotrichum omnivorum*). Horticulturists are at work at the Winter Garden Experiment Station, Crystal City, Texas, according to G. A. Bufington, trying to find such rootstocks. He is of the opinion that when such rootstocks are found, a small industry can be developed in Texas based on the production of extra-early table grapes and possibly extra-late varieties.



Frank Street, of Cardinal Farms, Henderson, Kentucky, writes that although his Kalhaven peaches were beautiful in color and size this past season, they were poor in quality compared with Redskin. He is finding an ever increasing demand among his "pick your own" customers for Redskin.



Rust immune black currants have been planted some in Canada. However, they are susceptible to mildew. We have located a source of mildew resistance and have just begun a program to try to combine resistance to rust with resistance to mildew.—*A. W. S. Hunter, Dept. of Agr., Ottawa, Canada.*