

Need for More Coordinated Research on Apple Rootstocks

The following letter was received by the Editor in February:

Dear Mr. Kessler:

I should like your opinion on an idea that has been growing in my mind. There is an increasing tendency to top-work desirable apple varieties on hardy stocks in very widely separated sections of the country, from Minnesota to Georgia, and from Pennsylvania to the Pacific Northwest. From correspondence I have had, there is a good indication that confusion exists among both growers and some professional horticulturists about what understocks are most suitable for the various apple varieties. This seems particularly true since the appearance of adverse reports on the use of Virginia and Hibernial.

Hibernial and Virginia crab rootstocks have been in use in Iowa over a long period of years, and we do recognize certain weaknesses and disadvantages of both. In the Pacific Northwest, consideration is being given to Canada Baldwin, Hawkeye, Antanovka, Haralson, Beacon and others. Programs involving apple rootstocks are being carried on in other sections as well.

With the need for better stocks for apple so widespread, it seems to me that there is and will be much wasteful duplication of effort, unless a cooperative, organized program for the study of various apple understocks can be developed, in which the various experiment stations, the U.S.D.A. and individual growers can participate.

Such a program could provide knowledge of adaptability of rootstocks to various soils and climatic conditions, and would indicate their strengths and weaknesses, compatibility with scion varieties and other char-

acteristics. Such coordinated efforts could lead to very reliable recommendations and be of great benefit to the apple and nursery industries.

The American Pomological Society might be able to determine if a need for such a program exists, if it is practical, and if so, to take the necessary steps to formulate and instigate such a program.

Very truly yours,

Wheelock Wilson

Wheelock Wilson Nursery
Marshalltown, Iowa

The Vice-President of the American Pomological Society, speaking for himself, responded to the above letter as follows:

Dear George:

I don't know just how the American Pomological Society could fit into Mr. Wilson's program beyond distribution of rootstock information in our publication *Fruit Varieties and Horticultural Digest*. There is a lot of work on rootstocks going on in several states, and certainly plenty of problems are coming up in all areas.

We are interested in this hardy framework situation not only for use as protection against winter-injury, but also for possible stem builders for our Clark Dwarf type tree.

I definitely believe that the only way that the A.P.S. can fit into this rootstock picture is by reporting on the various hardy stock blocks that are now being developed in all parts of this country and Canada.

Very sincerely,

Paul Stark, Jr.

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