## Short Prunings

A variety of subjects, treated briefly, will be featured in this column. The editors invite all readers, wherever located, to send them cards or short letters for inclusion here, and we shall try to include interesting items from our correspondence and conversation with other fruit growers.

We have an article on the culture of prickly pear in type, and expect to publish it in the next issue or two, providing we locate the illustrations with which it came from contributing editor Schroeder in Los Angeles. Meanwhile, northern growers of pear trees may be interested to know that the Flemish Beauty and Parker varieties are apparently synonomous. O. C. Roberts of the University of Massachusetts says that while it's very difficult to separate Chief and Latham red raspberries among nursery plantings, this is child's play compared to distinguishing the Parker pear from Flemish Beauty. Parker, according to the account we heard from another source, was selected from a fairly old seedling planting on a fruit breeding farm, as the most promising of several hundred seedlings. Not until later was it discovered in the old planting records that a tree or two of a named variety had been set in the same block, for comparison with the hardy seedlings. You guessed it—a Flemish Beauty tree was picked as the seedling most likely to succeed. Under both names, it remains one of the hardiest good pear varieties.

The reprinting of two nut articles in this issue is a by-product of another job the editor holds in his "spare time," secretary to the Northern Nut Growers Association. The versatile author of the butternut article, and this year's president of the NNGA, is perhaps most widely known as the junior author of Eames and MacDaniels' "Introduction to Plant Anatomy." Dr. Graves, formerly Curator of Public Information at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, has been working on various phases of the chestnut blight disease almost since it was discovered in the United States. The chestnut blight, originally from Asia, is now established in the chestnut orchards and groves of Southern Europe, while the blight resistant Chinese chestnuts in this country face a second possible scourge—in Missouri some of them have been killed by the rapidly spreading oak wilt disease, for which grafting gives no control.

From Missouri and nearby eastern Kansas come two promising new discoveries in another type of nut tree, the hican. Hicans are spontaneous hybrids (at least no new named varieties to date have been obtained by controlled hybridization) occurring in vicinities where the range of the pecan (**Carya illi-**

**noiensis)** overlaps the range of other 32-chromosome hickories. Most of the varieties introduced appear to be hybrids of pecan with the shellbark hickory **(C. laciniosa)**, though the bitternut hickory **(C. cordiformis)** has been a parent of many bitter hybrids and one edible one, the Pleas, which will mature farther north than nearly any pure pecan. G. A. Koon, M.D., of Brookfield, Mo., and Jay S. Underwood, of Uniontown, Kansas, are the discoverers of the two still unnamed seedling hicans. Both are thinner shelled and fill much better than the McCallister and Burlington hicans, and seem less susceptible to pecan weevil infestation. The Burton hican, from Owensboro, Kentucky, is another little-known but very promising variety, thought by some to be a hybrid of pecan and shagbark hickory **(C. ovata.)**

The best American persimmon variety among a dozen fruited at the Illinois Experiment Station is the Killen, originated on the farm of the late J. W. Killen, Felton, Delaware. Mr. Killen believed it to be a hybrid between American and Japanese persimmons, but in our opinion it is just an exceptionally fine native variety. However, there is a race of American persimmons with 90 chromosomes, the same number as in the Japanese, and it may be possible to hybridize these, though no one so far seems to have been successful in the attempt. (T. V. Munson's Kawakami variety was a seedling of the American variety, Josephine, supposedly insect-pollinated from a nearby tree of the Yemon, a Japanese variety. But the Yemon was later determined by H. Harold Hume to be a "pistillate constant," producing no pollen.)

George M. Kessler of Michigan State College will be assistant editor of the next issue of Fruit Varieties and Horticultural Digest, to be published shortly following this one.

Note to apple breeders: Walter W. Smith, 3818 8th Ave., Rock Island, Illinois, has in one of his orchards a giant sport of the Jonathan, which is believed to be a tetraploid tree.

The Nanticoke blackberry seems to be unavailable from nurseries under its true name. From Maryland, forty-odd years ago, it was brought to southern Illinois where it throve mightily around the little town of De Soto. Someone reintroduced it under that name, and more recently it has been called Healthberry and Tree blackberry, and widely planted from Texas to the Ohio valley. It's certainly a healthy plant, but not so healthy to get tangled in. Few brambles are thornier. One Tennessee grower suggests it for a "living fence," in situations where **Rosa multiflora** fails. With pneumatic pruners and 2, 4, 5T on hand, he thinks he can still grow other things on his farm.