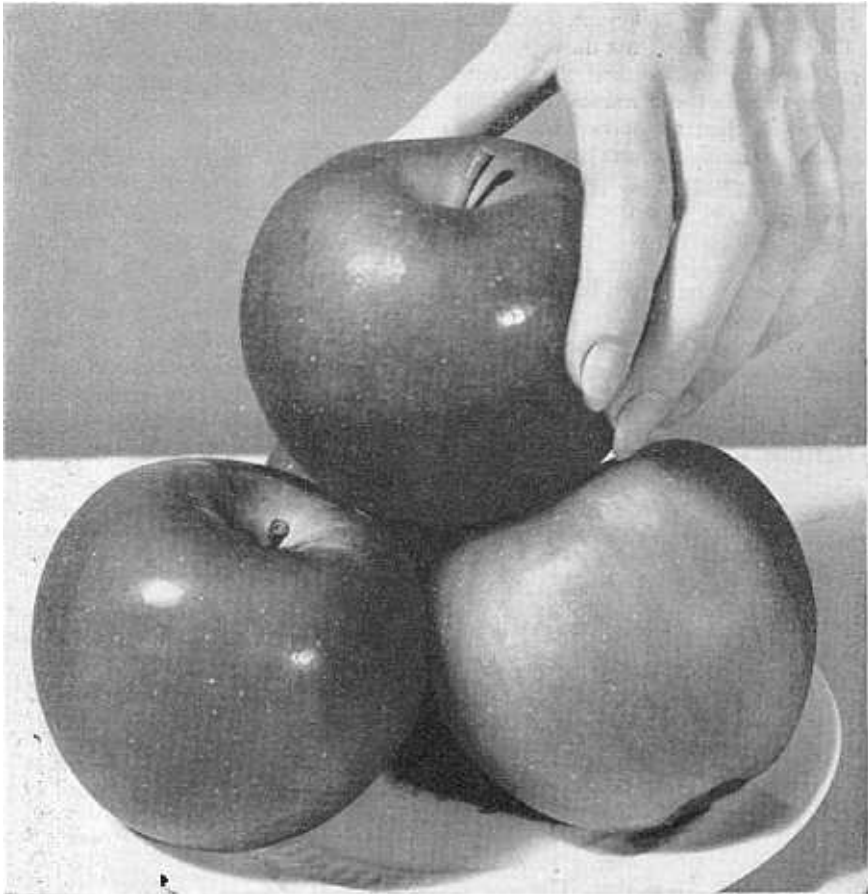


Ruby Apple, a Cross of Gallia Beauty and Starking

FREEMAN S. HOWLETT and C. W. ELLENWOOD

The long-time apple breeding program of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station is now quite literally bearing fruit. In the last few years three new apple varieties have been selected and named. Then as recently as March, 1952 a third variety was named Ruby. The

choice was not difficult for the fruit is so strikingly red as to immediately recall the stone which has become practically synonymous with redness. No other seedling produced by our breeding program has shown fruits of such brilliant, over-all carmine, although perhaps the



These are the new Ruby apples that were produced by pollinating Gallia Beauty with Starking. They are strikingly red and show good tree habits.

color pattern is less attractively varied than that of Franklin (*Farm & Home Research*, Jan.-Feb., 1952). In addition, the fruits tend to be large, solid and round, though to be more precise they should be described as rounded, oblong-conic.

Parentage of Variety

In introducing a new apple the parentage is of course a significant factor. Ruby was produced by pollinating Gallia Beauty (spring 1932), which is a seedling of Rome Beauty, with Starking, which is a red mutation of Delicious. Recalling that Delicious is one of the most popular varieties on the market and that Rome Beauty has made more money for Ohio fruit growers than any other apple, the parentage certainly augurs well for its success. Unfortunately, however, offsprings seldom acquire the best characteristics of both parents. In some ways Ruby improves upon the performance of one parent or the other; in others it is less satisfactory.

Ruby was planted in the seedling orchard at Wooster in 1935 and produced its first flowers in 1940. This single instance of early bearing is supported by the fact that additional trees propagated

from the original have also flowered after five years, one of the favorable characteristics of this variety. Equally favorable is the fact that the trees tend to produce annually, although such over-bearing as occurred on the original tree in 1951 naturally resulted in an off-year in 1952. The yield was, generally speaking, excellent, as is noted in the bearing record found in Table I.

TABLE I.—Bearing Record Since 1945 of Original Tree of Ruby

Year	Yield Bushels
1946	5.0
1947	4.5
1948	1.5
1949	13.1
1950	6.7
1951	21.0

Habits Are Good

Another valuable tree characteristic is the date of full bloom, which over the ten-year period ending in 1951 was one day earlier than Rome Beauty and Gallia Beauty, and on the average one day later than Delicious and Starking, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2.—Full Bloom Dates for Ruby, Rome Beauty, Gallia Beauty, Delicious and Starking, 1942-1952.

Year	Blooming Date		
	Ruby	Delicious*-Starking	Rome Beauty* or Gallia Beauty
1942	May 1	April 28*	April 30*
1943	May 17	May 16*	May 17
1944	May 12	May 11*	May 11
1945	April 15	April 14*	April 14
1946	April 27	April 25*	April 29
1947	May 19	May 21	May 21
1948	April 29	April 28	May 1
1949	May 1	May 6	May 5
1950	May 17	May 15	May 18*
1951	May 12	May 10	May 14*
1952	May 7	May 6	May 7
Average	May 6	May 5	May 7

The picking date as compared with Rome Beauty and Gallia Beauty showed some variation but in general they appeared to coincide. At Wooster it has been picked about two days earlier than Stayman Winesap, which means that it is one of our latest harvested apples. Thus the tree habits of this new variety can, to date, be described as good.

The ultimate factor in determining the value of a new variety is naturally fruit quality, both fresh and processed, and in relation to storage behavior. Although as a dessert apple the flavor cannot be considered as good as the best, it would appear to surpass that of Rome Beauty. In fact, those who have tried it at Wooster consider it a definite improvement on the flavor of the latter. It is somewhat juicy, neither sharp nor sweet, neither mild nor tasteless, with a flavor one might describe as sturdy rather than delicate.

This lack of distinction is offset by the fact that cooking does not detract from the flavor; in fact, it seems to improve it. And whether baked or stewed

for sauce the fruit shows a marked tendency to hold its shape during the process.

Firmness of Ruby is definitely equal to that of Gallia Beauty and superior to Delicious with, in addition, less shriveling than Stayman Winesap. Pressure tests made during late February showed it to be less firm, however, than York Imperial or Colora (mutation of York Imperial).

The same firmness contributes naturally to the highest successful storage behavior of this variety. Fruits hold exceptionally well in storage into April and May and in this respect are superior to Stayman Winesap. Furthermore, they are much less susceptible to scald than Rome Beauty.

In appearance Ruby is typical of all that we have come to expect of an apple and shows real promise of becoming a welcome and profitable addition to our present varieties.—Reprinted from *Ohio Farm and Home Research*, July-August, 1952.