

Two Nectarines and Five Home Orchard Peaches

Mr. Merrill says that these varieties for home use are selected primarily on the basis of flavor. "Flavor," he says, "is the most important characteristic of a home orchard peach. Furthermore, that flavor must develop while that peach is soft-ripe on the tree, as that is the way home orchardists want it. On the other hand, commercial varieties must develop their best flavor when picked firm-ripe and ripened off the tree." (Some physiologists will dispute whether any peach is actually at its best when so handled, but the fact remains that it can't be shipped after getting soft ripe.) "I have selected my home orchard varieties for their best flavor while the fruit is soft-ripe," with color, firmness, and heavy cropping not given the same consideration that they must have in the case of a commercial peach.

Seasons given below are for the climate of the Central Valley of California.

Merrill Brilliant is a brilliantly colored white fleshed peach, of delicious flavor, ripening early to mid-June. The tree is extremely vigorous.

Merrill Delicious is a yellow fleshed freestone, ripening mid-June to late June. Its unusually high eating quality is held well through the freezing process, and the flesh does not darken on exposure to air. The tree is vigorous and healthy.

Merrill Dandy combines a nice balance

of sweetness, acid and aroma with an attractive yellow flesh. The season of this freestone variety is early to mid-July. Although the tree is vigorous, it needs less pruning and thinning than most varieties.

Merrill Nectaheath is considered by the originator to be the most nearly ideal peach he knows for home use. It's a nectarine-peach cross, combining the fine flavor of the nectarine with the very large size of the J. H. Hale. Its white flesh is firm enough to can well, but soft enough to be good eating. Season is late July to early August. It normally sets lightly on a very vigorous tree, requiring almost no pruning or thinning.

Merrill Schooldays ripens about the time school vacations are over, late August to early September. It is a fine flavored yellow fleshed freestone, fine for home canning.

Merrill's home nectarine, the *Casa Linda*, is described as a fine white fleshed freestone with an aromatic, sweet flavor, juicy and very large for a nectarine. Its season is early to mid-August.

Merrill Sunrise nectarine, described as the earliest of all nectarines, ripens ten to fourteen days ahead of John Rivers (early June in the San Joaquin Valley). It is very red, very large, very firm and a semi-freestone. The tree is a much more regular bearer than John Rivers. The introducer thinks this nectarine will be extremely profitable as a shipping variety.

Puritan - A New Early Red Apple

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There has been so much interest among Massachusetts growers in Mass. C-31 seedling that we have decided to name and introduce it in spite of rather limited trial of it in terms of number of trees. Puritan originated from the cross Mc-

Intosh × Red Astrachan made by the late Professor F. C. Sears at the University of Massachusetts about 1929. It is an attractive, well colored red apple of medium size which retains its size well even with a full crop. The quality is good for

an early apple although somewhat on the tart side. The flesh is crisp, white and does not discolor readily. Sauce and pies made from it have a distinct pinkish color. Its season of harvest is just ahead of Early McIntosh and storage life is fully as good as that variety.

The tree of Puritan is vigorous, with wide crotch angles. Orchard tests indicate that it will pollinate McIntosh satisfactorily. Its most serious weakness is a

tendency toward biennial bearing. However, limited tests suggest that it is rather easily thinned with chemical thinning sprays of naphthalene acetic acid, so it is quite possible that some degree of annual production may be obtained.

We are not in a position to supply trees of Puritan, but a limited amount of propagating wood is available to interested fruit growers and nurserymen.

Plentiful, A New Strawberry Variety

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The Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station is releasing in March, 1953, a strawberry variety named Plentiful. Its parentage is Redstar \times Pathfinder, a cross made by A. S. Colby in 1941, at Urbana, Illinois. It was selected in 1945 and has been tested as Illinois 41-11 on the University of Illinois horticultural farm and at other locations in the state, and is under test at experiment stations throughout the United States.

Under Illinois conditions the plants of Plentiful are June-bearing and very high in productivity. This variety has been one of the highest yielders in the extensive variety tests conducted on the station grounds during the last few years. The plants are large and produce many runners, making a wide row. No red stele root rot has been found on the roots of plants growing on sites infested with this disease. The foliage is resistant to leaf spot and leaf scorch. The leaves are large, cupped, thick, and glossy. The flowers are perfect.

In Illinois, Plentiful matures its fruit in late midseason. Its harvesting period is about two weeks in length. The berries are well formed throughout the season. The fruit is medium large to very large, blunt conic to wedge in shape, smooth,

fairly glossy, medium-light red, evenly colored, and attractive in appearance. The calyx is medium in size. The achenes are medium in number, about flush with the surface to slightly raised, and yellow to red depending upon exposure. The fresh fruit is medium in sugar and acid content and medium in flavor. The flavor of the frozen product is very high, although the color is too light red to be particularly attractive. Limited tests indicate that Plentiful is not sufficiently firm for long distance shipment, but is particularly adapted for home use and local market.

Plentiful is the second variety (Vermilion, a sister of Plentiful, being the first) to be named as a result of a strawberry breeding program at the University of Illinois, to originate varieties resistant to red stele root rot under conditions in Illinois, and having other plant and fruit characters necessary for their profitable production.

The University of Illinois has no plants for sale. A considerable quantity of stock is available this spring from cooperating nurserymen.

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