

Redbud and Lexington, Two New Varieties of Nectarine

GEORGE D. OBERLE and R. C. MOORE*

Blacksburg, Virginia

There has been considerable interest shown by a few growers in Virginia in the planting of nectarines. In view of this increased interest, it appears desirable to make available for test planting two new varieties that ripen earlier in the season than Redchief and Cavalier, the two varieties released by the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station in 1952. Extending the season of availability of the fruit may be expected to result in increased consumer interest and demand for this much liked fruit. The flavors of both varieties have been described as slightly sharp and slightly bitter, but are comparable to those of Redchief and Cavalier, both of which are of acceptable quality.

Redbud is a white fleshed nectarine formerly designated as V.P.I. 47n. Its season of maturity has averaged 27 days before Elberta or about 14 days before Redchief. The fruits are of average size for eastern varieties of nectarines, averaging about 2" in diameter. The skin color is solid, bright red with smooth finish and a high level of attractiveness. The fruits are freestone although there may occasionally be slight adherence of the flesh to the suture of the pit. The flesh is of medium texture and may show a slight tendency to stringiness. It is above average in firmness. The quality has been evaluated as good. The fruits of Redbud have shown a high level of ability to escape infection from brown rot when given the standard peach spray schedule recom-

mended for Virginia. The trees are of average vigor and produce heavy sets of buds. The buds are more tolerant to blossoming season frosts than the buds of Redchief, but slightly less tolerant than the buds of Cavalier.

Lexington is a yellow fleshed nectarine that ripens about 17 days before Elberta or 9 days before Cavalier. The fruits have averaged 2" to 2 1/8" in diameter and are distinctly ovate in shape. The skin is a deep yellow overlaid with medium red. The fruits are considered attractive, but russetting of the skin has been noted in some seasons. The flesh is free from the pit, of medium texture with a slight tendency to stringiness and medium firm. The flavor resembles that of Cavalier and its quality has been rated as good and comparable to Cavalier. The standard peach spray schedule recommended for Virginia orchards has given ample protection against brown rot infection on Lexington but the variety is considered to have slightly less inherent ability to escape brown rot infection than Cavalier. The tree of Lexington is extremely vigorous and produces a heavy set of buds. The buds have demonstrated a higher level of frost escaping ability at Blacksburg than Redchief but less than Cavalier.

The parentage of Redbud and Lexington is V.P.I. 13 x self. V.P.I. 13 is a white fleshed freestone peach selected from a population of seedling peaches grown from open pollinated pits from a tree developed by crossing New Boy nectarine with Golden Jubilee.

*Professor and Assoc. Professor of Horticulture, Virginia Polytechnic Institute.