

Comments on the Beacon Apple

The Beacon apple is highly colored here in Kansas. It ripens in the early part of August, when it is hot and dry. It colors rapidly during the last few days of ripening, and one has to make a close decision between color and maturity. However, if picked firm-ripe, it has color that is far superior to that of any other variety of its season grown in this territory.

Beacon appears to be a good annual bearer, although my trees have not been in bearing long enough to pass judgment in this regard. The apple is of superior eating quality when fresh, and makes a very good apple pie, in my opinion. However, it is not as good as the more tart apples such as Jonathan. Beacon yields a good pink-colored sauce, and also stands up well when picked firm-ripe.

Still, this variety is not perfect for this area. Although the tree is a good grower and apparently winter hardy, yet it seems somewhat brittle, and the lateral branches are inclined to split from the main branches. So far, however, none of the main branches have split from the trunk. In addition, the fruit is subject to water core. We had very wet seasons in 1950 and 1951, which I thought might account for this. However, this condition of the fruit was also quite prevalent in the dry summer of 1952.

Apparently, Beacon is also subject to fireblight, from the amount of this disease which it showed during the past two years, although twigblight did not show up in an earlier year when Jonathan was hit heavily. The appearance of blight on Beacon has been very spotted during the past two years, some trees being severely blossom blighted while others were entirely free of the disease. Twig blight has not been severe.

All in all, I rate this apple very highly for its season. Its color is very attractive and it brings high prices. Some of the other growers are now planting Beacon, after observing its performance in my orchard, and I don't think they are making a mistake.

—A. J. Kincaid, Wathena, Kansas.

I planted 150 Beacon apples in our part of Missouri in March, 1945, along with Lodi, Duchess and Wealthy. I was seeking something to keep me occupied between Duchess and Wealthy.

The Beacon trees have grown vigorously and spreading, and probably should be set wider than average. The trees are much larger than the Duchess or Wealthy set at the same time.

My son and I pruned the Beacon trees this past winter. They are large enough so that one can climb up in the trees, and although I weigh 190 pounds I never broke a limb.

They yielded a nice crop, in 1952, of large-sized, well colored apples that sold at higher prices than Duchess or Wealthy. However, this spring the bloom was light except for a few trees. Perhaps ten per cent of the trees had a good bloom. I don't know whether Beacon is biennial or not.

The fruit of Beacon have shown a lot of water core, but we often have that here on young, vigorous trees. On the other hand, the fruit holds up well after harvest.

In 1952, when fire blight was bad on Lodi and Wealthy, killing limbs back two or three feet, the Beacon trees showed no signs of this disease.

I think a lot of the Beacon apple, and have recommended it to my friends who asked about it.

—Frank D. Connett, Gower, Missouri