

The Starking and Richared Delicious Apples in British Columbia

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This Station is testing a number of red bud sports of commercial apple varieties. Starking and Richared were among the earlier introductions of this kind and they are already in heavy commercial production in this area.

Trees. The trees of both strains are indistinguishable from Delicious, being large, upright and spreading, vigorous and healthy, with fairly strong crotches and limbs. Like Delicious, these strains are only moderately hardy, being susceptible to trunk and crotch injury in severe winters in the northern Okanagan and districts with similar climate. The trees bear heavily, require moderate thinning, and under good cultural conditions are fairly consistent annual croppers. The fruit, like Delicious, picks easily and is not usually susceptible to pre-harvest drop.

Fruit. While each of these strains bears much more highly colored fruit than ordinary Delicious, they differ markedly from one another in type of color. Starking is predominantly a striped apple, with a bright crimson skin overlaid with darker red stripes. On the other hand, Richared, as grown under British Columbia conditions, never shows any striping. Its color is a uniform deep red, usually quite bright but under unfavorable conditions sometimes tending to be dull and coppery. In all other respects the fruits of Starking and Richared closely resemble Delicious, being large to medium in size, firm, tough-skinned, crisp, juicy, sweet and of good quality. The flesh is cream-colored and the core is of medium size. The medium length of stem combines with the tough-

ness of skin to render the fruit very resistant to stem-puncturing.

Picking and storage season. Starking and Richared mature at the same season as Delicious, about two weeks later than McIntosh, and midway between that variety and Winesap. Due to the early coloring characteristics of these bud sports, it has been necessary for growers to be alert to the danger of picking them before optimum maturity. Given prompt storage at 31° F., Starking and Richared have the good keeping qualities of ordinary Delicious, their storage life usually being terminated in late Spring by the development of mealiness and consequent loss of quality.

Commercial status. These red strains have practically replaced ordinary Delicious in recent plantings in this territory, and future production will undoubtedly show a gradually diminishing proportion of the original variety. At present, the market shows a distinct preference for the Starking type of color, as compared to the solid blush of Richared, so that recent planting recommendations have stressed the Starking type. Both red strains are marketed under the name "Red Delicious," and growers who have both strains in their orchards are now being advised to keep them separate in picking and packing, since a mixture of the two in a packed box or in a retail display is less attractive than either strain appearing separately.

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