

## A Nationwide Project in Fruit Variety Appraisal

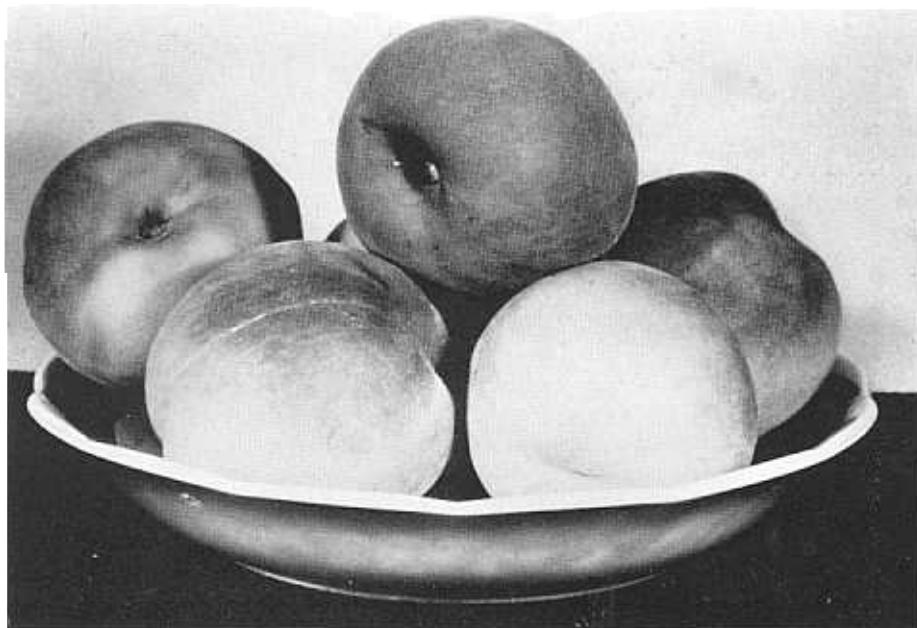
By JOHN T. BREGGER

Chairman, Variety Appraisal Committee

The evaluation of fruit varieties has long been a neglected project. The chief lack has been a coordinated or national plan for making an appraisal or comparison of varieties which would be of value to fruit growers and nurseryman. The result of this situation is to make a guessing contest of both nursery propagation and orchard planting. Each propagator tries to guess for a few years ahead, the demands of the fruit growers. At the same time the growers will be guessing as to what the consumer demand is likely to be several more years hence. Into both of these choices should go the advice of scientific pomologists and the experience of the fruit growers themselves. The lack

of reliable recommendations has always been the handicap of most systematic horticulturists because of inadequate testing facilities. The most reliable evaluation of varieties necessitates the development of well conceived test plantings, a carefully prepared score card, and a wealth of observational experience. Out of these should come an unbiased appraisal or comparison of those fruit varieties which are old enough to have fruited several years.

Although long time plans should be instituted to insure adequate variety testing in the future, there is much that can be done right now in compiling and summarizing the variety information already available. Fortunately such data will come from a large number of climatic conditions and geographical sections. It



Halehaven peaches are rapidly becoming a favorite with many growers in the east, central, and northern states.

is this job of variety evaluation that The American Pomological Society will now attempt to accomplish. A Variety Appraisal Committee was appointed during the late summer of 1945 and the work began almost immediately. Soon afterwards, the support of The American Association of Nurserymen was enlisted and with their assistance a much more thorough and complete survey will be made.

#### Objectives of Appraisal

The variety appraisal project will be conducted in three parts:

(1) Survey of state horticultural agencies to determine their present variety recommendations for new fruit plantings.

(2) Survey of fruit growers in each state to determine their variety preferences.

(3) Survey of fruit tree and plant nurseries to determine their present programs of variety propagation and quantity of sales.

The three foregoing surveys will make use of blanks listing all well known and new varieties of the various fruits. Not only will fruit growers check the varieties they are now growing, but will also indicate those old varieties they feel should be discarded and the new ones which should, in their opinion, be added in a

new fruit planting. Surveys for the current season are limited to the apple, peach and strawberry. Other fruits and nuts will be covered next year.

#### Publication of Results

As the data on fruit varieties comes in, it will be summarized and made available to all parties interested in such information. It is felt that the nurseries will make the first real use of this material by directing their future propagation plans in accordance with the variety preferences of our best informed horticulturists and fruit growers. Particular attention will be focused on the inferior, non-profitable varieties of fruit which complicate the marketing program, and should assist in excluding such varieties from future orchards. This survey should also put all branches of the fruit industry in closer touch with improved varieties which are now available for planting.

Progress reports of the variety survey will be published as soon as possible. Watch for future references on this subject in *Fruit Varieties and Horticultural Digest*. The State Committee Chairman will also make reports to local and state meetings of fruit growers. If you have not received copies of the survey blanks through your state American Pomological Society representative, write your Extension Horticulturist or to the Committee Chairman at Clemson, South Carolina.

