Apricots in Ontario

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At the Horticultural Experiment Station, Vineland Station 58 varieties of apricots have been tested since the station was established in 1906. At the present time 33 varieties are under test. Most of these varieties have come from the west coast and are not suited to Ontario conditions. There are several reasons why they have not been successful. Apricots bloom early in the spring and often encounter cool wet weather in our district. Many of the present varieties are very subject to blossom and twig blight and the fruit is susceptible to brown rot. Plum curculio was also a problem until some of the newer insecticides became available.

Needed are varieties that bloom later or have the ability to set fruit under adverse conditions like many peach varieties.

In 1949 a breeding program was started at Vineland Station using Geneva as the seed parent and crossing it with Gibb, Henderson, Naramata and New Perfection. Further crosses were made at Vineland Station in 1951. In the spring of 1953, British Columbia shipped a number of untried seedlings to Vineland Station for testing.They were grown in the nursery for two years, the weaker seedlings were discarded, and approximately a thousand were planted in 1955. From all of these seedlings approximately 50 selections are being tested for orchard performance, dessert and canning quality.

The 1949 Vineland seedlings fruited for the first time in 1955. The spring of 1956 was late, cold, and wet and only one selection (49024) had a partial crop. All named varieties were a complete crop-failure. Since 1956 there have been four good crops of most varieties. Most of the 1951 seedlings started to bear in 1958 and have had three crops. The next off-year should help to eliminate some of these selections. Being compared with these selections are named varieties and selections from Michigan, New York, Washington, and British Columbia.

Many of the standard western varieties like Blenheim, Moorpark, and Tilton are worthless under Niagara conditions. Even when a crop is set, the fruit usually crack and split before they are ripe. The best of the named varieties are Naramata, New Perfection, Geneva and Montgamet. Naramata is an early variety ripening in mid-July. It is highly colored, medium size, and has fair dessert quality, but is of no value for canning.

New Perfection, ripening two weeks later, is the largest apricot grown at Vineland Station. It is a small spreading tree in contrast to the upright growing Naramata. The fruit is pale in color and only of fair quality for both dessert and canning.

Geneva, ripening a day or two after New Perfection, is the best canning variety of the four. However, because the tree is small, weak, and breaks down badly, it cannot be recommended for general planting. The fruit is rather flat in shape, pale in color, and of only medium size.

Montgamet is the latest of these varieties, ripening approximately the middle of August. It is the most com-

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mon variety grown in the Niagara district. It has good size and color, and good dessert quality, but is only fair to poor when canned, and has only a fair yield record.

Although further results are necessary before the best can be sorted out of the 50 selections already made, two show promise at this time. The first, selection 49056, is a Geneva × Naramata cross, ripening the 3rd week in July. The tree is large, vigorous, and productive. The fruit is medium to large in size, round, with an attractive red blush. Dessert quality is good but it is rather soft for canning.

Selection 51142, from the British Columbia seedling (Tilton × Reliable) × open, ripens a week later than Montgamet. The tree is vigorous and moderately productive. The fruit is medium to large in size with a bright color. Dessert quality is only fair, but it is rated high for canning.

At the present time there is renewed interest in apricots in Ontario. Processors particularly are watching the development of new varieties, and if ones are found that are consistent enough in yield to be profitable, a new industry could develop.

Muscadine Grapes

The story of the muscadine grape is told in a most interesting manner by Robert Schmidt in the "Mega" magazine. The muscadines are native to our southern states and will not thrive further north, where zero temperatures are likely.

For a long time pollination was a problem, because the first cultivated types were dioecious, and it was necessary to have male (staminate) and female (pistillate) plants. However, not too many years ago, Charles Dearing, of the U. S. D. A. at Willard, N. C., developed several perfect flowered clones (varieties), the best of which are Tarheel and Burgaw. Unfortunately, their quality is inferior to the old pistillate varieties.

More recently, C. F. Williams, of the North Carolina Agr. Exp. Station, introduced several perfect flowered clones of high quality. The varieties now recommended include Memory, Hunt, Thomas, Topsail and Scuppernong. Although some refer to all the white varieties as scuppernongs, Scuppernong is a true clone of muscadine, and not a separate species.

Muscadines are easy to grow. They require little or no spraying, because their thick-skinned fruit are quite resistant to insects and most grape diseases, including black rot, which is serious with the labruscas. They ripen in late August and September, and make excellent jelly and juice products.

Varietal Differences in Frozen Apple Pies

D. R. Davis, of Ohio State University reports in Ohio Farm and Home Research that Turley Winesap, Stayman Winesap made the best frozen apple pies from canned slices, out of 15 varieties tested. Jonathan, Stayman Winesap, Northern Spy, Red Delicious, Melba and Ruby made the highest quality frozen pies from fresh fruit, although the latter two were soft. Finally, Jonathan, Stayman Winesap, Franklin and Cortland pies made from frozen slices rated highest. Jonathan and Stayman Winesap were the top varieties in the test since they rated high in pies from fresh or frozen slices.