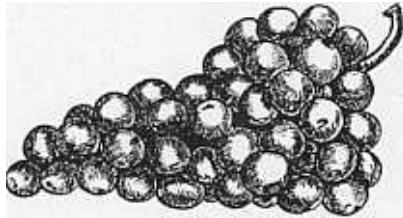


than others. Several one-generation selfed seedlings have borne fruit but have not yet been used for further selfing or crossing.

All seedlings are left unsprayed to permit the unhindered expression of susceptibility to fungous and insect pests. The

fruit of all seedlings is tested for dessert quality, and is also subjected to refractometer tests for the estimate of sugar content. These tests have revealed a considerable number of hardy seedlings with a sugar content between 20 and 23 per cent.



Varieties – Growers vs. Consumers

By C. W. ELLENWOOD

Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station

One of the important and perennial projects of an experiment station, is the development and testing of varieties of fruits.

The very fact that so much time has been spent and still is being spent on this phase of horticultural work can be taken as evidence, that there are no perfect varieties. There is no doubt concerning the justification of the use of time and money in variety testing and fruit breeding projects.

Having thus established our horticultural orthodoxy we want from this point on to discuss certain aspects of variety testing, which we believe need examination. We recognize that natural conditions, such as climate, soil and related

factors frequently determine the adaption of a variety to a given area. These restrictions are rather largely fixed and cannot within any degree of practicality be changed by the horticulturist or fruit grower. Fortunately enough, there are a good many varieties which do equally well over large areas and we are thinking of these varieties in this discussion.

Consider Consumer Preferences

We horticulturists, and for that matter fruit growers also, entirely too often, leave out of consideration two important factors in setting up values on varieties. One of these is the opinion of the consumer and the other is the productivity of the variety in terms of marketable fruit over the life of the orchard. Let's stick to one fruit in these observations, apples.

We have just been reading some results of an exhaustive study made in large consuming areas concerning consumer acceptance of different varieties, grades, sizes and colors. These results, as do those of all similar surveys, show that the great mass of consumers are not variety conscious, nor do they understand the fine discriminations we horticulturists make between varieties.

Professional Standards Too High?

A close study of the Proceedings of State Horticultural Societies, over a long period of years will show that variety values depend entirely too much on what the investigator or grower personally thinks and not nearly enough on what the consumer thinks. Over a rather long period in variety work, the writer has, he now confesses, set up standards of quality that appealed to him as all important. When these standards have been approved by co-workers and reputable growers, a variety has gone up or down according to these standards without too much thought as to how the consumer reacts. Generally speaking this has been the conventional approach. Actually, these factors that we use to determine quality, such as flavor, degree of acidity and texture of flesh, while very real to us, are less important to the consumer. As a matter of fact, no one has yet shown very much difference in the actual food value between varieties. Sure, the acid and sugar content vary. Some varieties are definitely better for certain culinary requirements than others. When put to the test we horticulturists go far beyond this because we become experts and attempt to detect fine differences in flavor and other matters of

quality. We forget that the average consumer still buys with his eyes. The things that are important to him, or in most cases more likely her, are color, size and condition. They may buy cooking apples, red or green and now and then, Delicious, McIntosh, Baldwin, or some other particular variety, but on the whole consumer knowledge of, or interest in, varieties is very limited.

From the growers standpoint over the long pull, a variety simply must be capable of heavy production, of fair sized fruit, which by its appearance has sales appeal. It's a lot better if this heavy production is from annual, rather than biennial bearing varieties. If the variety meets the high standards set up by horticulturists and growers, so much the better. It takes a lot of price differential at the market however to make up for light production in the orchard or a heavy grade out in the packing room.

Rome Beauty in Ohio

At the risk of getting into "hot water", we want to illustrate our point by referring to the experience of one variety here in Ohio. The Rome Beauty apple originated in Ohio. This variety, and more recently its seedling, Gallia Beauty, has made more money for Ohio apple growers during the last twenty-five years than any other. As far as we can determine at the present time it still is our most important variety. An odd fact in the situation is that the growers of Rome, while admitting it is their best money maker, are more or less apologetic about the whole thing. The fact that these growers prefer to use other varieties for their own use often makes them sell it short when they talk about

varieties. Sure, it lacks in a lot of things, but it is attractive from the consumer's point of view and it produces good crops year in and year out. Until some variety has demonstrated by performance that it will bring a bigger net cash income per acre, it would seem the wise thing for Ohio apple growers to accept the standards of the consumer and boost Rome Beauty. Of course in the meantime it is the job of the Experiment Stations to keep on trying to develop something better. In Ohio the new Jonathan-Delicious seedling, called "Melrose" may supplant Rome Beauty, but for the present our commercial growers had better place

most of their money on Rome Beauty.

We've used Rome Beauty only to illustrate the point that the consumer has the final say in the choice of apples. The same general principles could apply to other varieties for other sections.

When apples are sold by the grower at his roadside stand or in some other, grower to consumer method, there is opportunity for variety salesmanship, but we cannot expect a clerk in a retail establishment in New York City to know, or care very much about the superb quality of, say, a Cox orange. They are just apples to him.



The Ambergem Clingstone Peach

By STANLEY JOHNSTON

Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station

In the early days of the development of the California fruit industry, which was before the invention of the refrigerator car, growers realized that much of their fruit would have to be processed and then shipped to eastern markets.

In searching for superior varieties of fruit for processing, it was discovered that the clingstone peach made a much better appearing canned product than the freestone. Consequently, a few clingstone varieties of merit were found and California growers and canners steadily increased their output of canned cling-

stone peaches until at present they produce over 95 per cent of this particular product for the entire country.

Twenty-five years ago fruit canners in Michigan appealed to the Agricultural Experiment Station for aid in finding clingstone peach varieties suitable for canning, and which would produce satisfactorily in the climatic conditions found in Michigan.

Western Varieties Tested

All of the principal clingstone varieties of California were grown at the South Haven Experiment Station, but it was found that these varieties did not