

The Apple Variety Situation in New England

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The six New England states form a climatic district with a more or less common list of varieties. The Hudson and Champlain Valleys in New York are like New England and grow the same apples. As we go west to Lake Michigan minor changes occur, but as we go south the selections are distinctively different. Even within the New England-eastern New York area, climatic conditions differ enough to necessitate some special care in the selection of varieties. Baldwin and a few other sorts that are successful in southern New England winterkill too often in the north. Stayman and other warm season varieties mature in most seasons in the southern sections but find the summer too short and cool in the northern areas.

The New England Seven

It is now about 30 years since the "New England Seven" were proposed. They were Baldwin, Delicious, Gravenstein, McIntosh, Northern Spy, Rhode Island Greening, and Wealthy. No one has yet made a revision of the "New England Seven" but the growers have made modifications.

The old leader, Baldwin, is declining in favor, even in southern New England where it rarely winterkills severely. Its bearing habit is uncertain. It should be planted only on soils known to be well suited to the variety. Good Baldwin apples find a ready market and there is no certain replacement in sight.

Delicious has been planted primarily as a pollinator of McIntosh, and not because it is itself profitable. It is still planted in small numbers.

Gravenstein is not hardy and has been confined to parts of southern New England. The fact that it is a summer apple limits its usefulness. Its culture is not increasing.

McIntosh Is The Leader

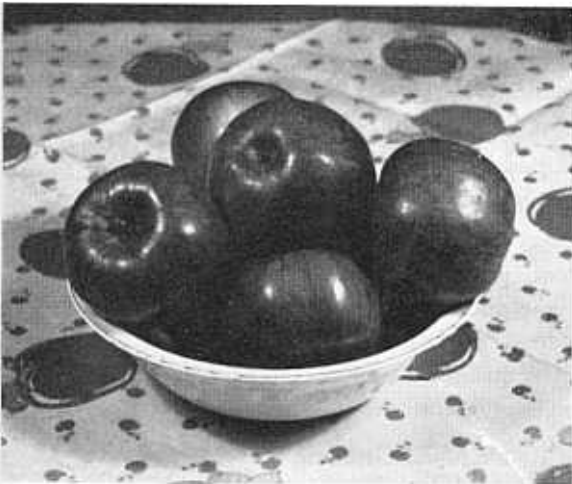
McIntosh has been and continues to be the leader over all New England and eastern New York. Some wonder if we have too many McIntosh largely because of the rush at harvest time. It has been and continues to be the most profitable variety. Growers recommend planting 50% to 70% McIntosh. It has sold at a premium over other varieties but the margin is getting narrower. It produces more bushels per tree and per acre than any other commercial variety. Susceptibility to scab and a tender flesh are the two serious faults of McIntosh.

In northern New England, the Northern Spy replaces the Baldwin but has never prevailed there to as great an extent, probably because it is so slow to come into bearing. Capital costs pile up during this waiting period. Despite its good quality, it continues to be a lagging rival of McIntosh and Baldwin.

Rhode Island Greening is also a minor member of this group. It has never been planted much and is not gaining favor. Its green color and frequent tendency to scald in storage are against it.

Wealthy was planted most often as a filler variety. This meant a larger number of trees and as it must be sold before McIntosh comes into the market, there have been too many Wealthy for profit. Most growers would not plant many Wealthy at the present time.

Thus the "New England Seven" proved to be made up of five minor varieties and only two of real importance, McIntosh and Baldwin, and the latter is declining. The area has been tending toward one variety, McIntosh, with a few trees of other later varieties and a few earlier varieties to meet local demand until McIntosh came in. Modern cold storage has made it possible to keep McIntosh, in appearance at least, until April or even May.



Northern Spy, an apple of excellent culinary quality, but is losing importance as a commercial variety because it is late in coming into bearing and expensive to produce.

New Varieties to Supplement McIntosh

Many growers are thinking about new varieties to supplement but not to replace McIntosh. Among earlier varieties, Early McIntosh has been considerably planted; probably there are now enough trees to supply future demands. Very few trees of varieties earlier than Early McIntosh are planted and the market is too limited to warrant many of them. Milton is increasing in favor as a variety to follow Early McIntosh.

Cortland follows McIntosh closely and is increasing in favor faster than any other variety. In late winter it is a better apple than McIntosh.

Golden Delicious has been planted in small numbers, more in Maine than elsewhere. The excellent quality of this variety will overcome the prejudice in favor of red color. It bears early and freely and keeps its quality well if stored in sufficient humidity. Other less humid regions can produce a more attractive Golden Delicious and it can hardly become a major variety in New England but may be profitable for local markets.

Some Baldwins will and should be planted but only under soil and climatic conditions favorable to the best development of the variety. We still need a hardy, productive winter variety to replace Baldwin. Rome Beauty is being planted by some growers in southern New England.

No mention has been made of the red "bud sports" of several varieties. As elsewhere, they meet increasing favor and they are generally planted instead of the parent varieties mentioned above; thus, instead of the old Rome Beauty, one of the red forms, most often Gallia, is used. The Massachusetts station has a redder Baldwin but whether it is more desirable than the typical Baldwin is not yet certain. Numerous "strains" of McIntosh are under observation and close study may reveal important differences.

Thus far the only suggestion is to avoid the distinctly striped strains.

Young Orchards Needed

Many orchards in New England are getting old. If reputation is to be maintained, new orchards must be planted. It is imperative that only good sites and soils should be planted, and to the most suitable varieties. The variety question has always been and will continue to be one of the most critical problems of the fruit grower.



A National Appraisal of Peach Varieties

By John T. Bregger

Variety Appraisal Committee

Following the appraisal of apple varieties published in the last issue of **FRUIT VARIETIES** let us now survey the peach variety situation. Although peaches are not grown in as many states as apples, their distribution in the South is much greater and is almost equal in an east-to-west coverage of the country.

Dividing the country into five general areas, we have summarized peach

variety reports within each area. Following a little different system than that used with the apples, the varieties are listed within each district according to their present and contemplated plantings by the growers contacted. While this listing does not take into consideration the per cent of new total acreage to be devoted to each variety, it does indicate which varieties are gaining ground and which ones are losing ground. The emphasis growers have placed on the discard of certain varieties also indi-