

needed before the problem of winter survival can be fully understood.

If the problem of winter survival can be broken down into some such specific

factors of the hardiness complex, it seems likely that we shall materially advance our knowledge of the winter behavior of woody fruit plants.



The Baldwin Apple

1740 To The Present

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The Baldwin clon is fully 200 years old. S. A. Beach, in *The Apples of New York*, gives as its origin a farm in Wilmington, near Lowell, Massachusetts "soon after 1740." Its dissemination and popularity did not come at once, but William Kenrick wrote of it in 1833: "No apple in the vicinity of Boston is so popular as this at the present day." F. C. Bradford, in his Master's thesis on *Maine Apple Varieties*, placed Baldwin as the leading commercial variety of Maine from 1850 through 1910. This leadership was held until 1933, but the following severe winter killed or severely injured some two-thirds of the Baldwin trees in Maine orchards and gave impetus to a decline that had already set in and has continued since.

Many Unfavorable Reports

Contributing to *Agriculture of Maine* about 1867, Calvin Chamberlain of Foxcroft cited the experiments of a "Mr. A." in one of the eastern counties, who reported: "I have tried some 100 varieties, and thrown away about 50 recorded in the books as worthless in this soil and climate. Among them is the Baldwin. I cut down a tree of that variety this fall that had been living and dying for ten years and produced about a barrel of imperfect apples." This is an extreme case because the tree was probably located near Oldtown, Maine, which was too far north for this variety. Ultimately Baldwin was adjudged to be out of place throughout much of New England.

In 1873, Z. A. Gilbert of Androscoggin County wrote that the Baldwin fruit

was satisfactory but that the tree had ever been pronounced tender in Maine by orchardists. In Mr. Gilbert's words, "those who have not heeded the warnings of experience . . . now have the ghostly branches of their dead trees pointing out their folly . . . We have nothing that can be fully recommended to fill the gap . . . The whole world should be searched for a hardy, productive, late keeping apple for Maine."

One Alfred Smith of Monmouth, about 1877, said "As to the Baldwin, it will not bear high culture on low lands. On our high lands it does well, but it will winter-kill if driven too hard . . . I have lost more money in undertaking to raise it than with any other kind."

By 1882 the geographic limitation of Baldwin was pretty well understood by Dr. T. H. Hoskins, then of Newport, Vt. In the Transaction of the Maine State

Pomological Society for 1882, we find this from Dr. Hoskins in reference to Baldwin: "it must be a wonderful fruit that will replace it in the regard and confidence of growers and consumers. It is as hard to dethrone a popular fruit as to revolutionize a popular government." Further on he said, "It must be conceded that the Baldwin apple is a fruit of southern New England only."

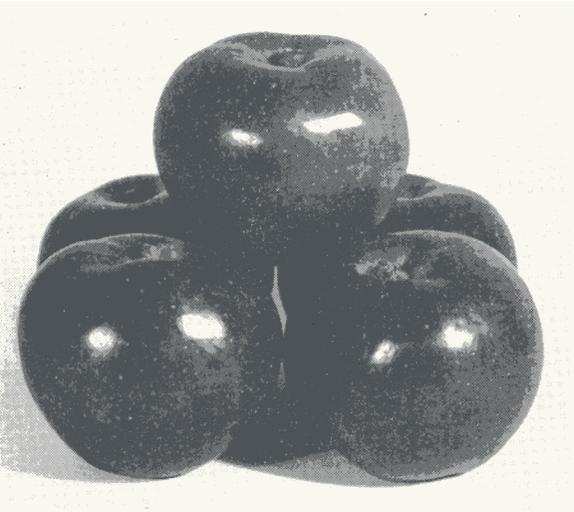
Favorable Comments

No variety was yet in sight to replace it, and so Maine orchardists kept on growing Baldwins. Occasionally also a word of praise appears in the reports. In 1885 it was reported that Maine Baldwins topped the market for the variety in Liverpool. In the same year J. W. Lang of Waldo County expressed his opinion that 'growing Baldwin apples in Maine is as promising in outlook and paying in returns as growing oranges in



Winter-killed Baldwin trees, illustrating one of the principal weaknesses of this variety.

Courtesy M. T. Hilborn, Maine Agr. Expt. Station.



Baldwin apples produced at the University of Maine, Orono, Maine. The trees live and produce fruit in this cold climate because of being topworked on hardy understocks.

Florida, and not attended by half the privations and disadvantages.'

Then came another test winter, that of 1890-1891. D. H. Knowlton, secretary of the Pomological Society at the time said "it was one of unusual severity, and Baldwin and some of the tender varieties were injured in consequence."

Winter Hardiness

Lack of winter hardiness is thus the characteristic most often cited in condemnation of the Baldwin, but the variety would ultimately have declined for other reasons. It is slow to arrive at bearing age. It has a pronounced alternate bearing habit. It is a triploid, and for this season unless as a pollinizer for other varieties. Besides, the fruit is of only fair to good dessert quality, which is quite a large step below the excellence of McIntosh, Cortland, and Delicious. Baldwin packed in barrels served well as a late winter apple for both domestic and export trade. Its place as a winter cooking apple has not been filled adequately in this region. It has finally been dethroned by McIntosh and will before long be surpassed in production by Cortland, and perhaps by apples of the Delicious type. Nevertheless, 200 years of existence and 100 years of outstanding leadership is indeed a kingly record.

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