

High Quality and Unusual Peach Varieties for the Amateur

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Quality—just what do we mean by that? To most peach breeders quality means flavor, the amount of peach flavor that a fruit has. Others include many other characteristics in their definition of quality, with flavor usually being considered last. But I will be talking about quality, meaning flavor. The varieties discussed below may be, and some are, very poor in some of the other characteristics that make a profitable commercial variety; but the amateur, who wants some fruit for himself to eat or to give to his neighbour, can afford to put up with some of these defects for the sake of the better quality. Of course, most any peach variety picked tree-ripe will taste better than the same variety bought at the super-market. The fruit at the supermarket was picked long before it was eating ripe, so that it could be handled and shipped.

The varieties listed and described below are just a few of the ones that the amateur can try. Each grower will have his own list of "best" varieties—those that do best for him, and best meet his needs.

Prairie Dawn, from the breeding program of the University of Illinois, is the earliest one, ripening about five weeks before Elberta. The fruit is large, freestone, and has yellow flesh. It is very winter hardy and is resistant to bacterial leaf spot.

Redhaven, from the breeding program at South Haven, Mich., follows **Prairie Dawn** by about a week or ten days. **Redhaven** is also a yellow-fleshed, freestone peach with good

size, but must be thinned well, early; otherwise it will be small and undesirable. It, too, is hardy. **Redhaven** is planted widely commercially, and is one of the first varieties to come on the market from a given area.

Raritan Rose is a hardy, white-fleshed, freestone variety ripening with **Redhaven**. It is an attractive, good quality white peach. It is softer than **Redhaven**.

Oriole and **Envoy** are hardy varieties that follow **Redhaven**. **Envoy** is a Golden Jubilee type, ripening a few days after Golden Jubilee. **Envoy** is more attractive than Jubilee, but not much firmer. It has good quality. **Oriole** and **Envoy** are both of medium size (2¼-2½" in diameter) with half to three-quarters of the skin covered with a red blush.

Sunhigh is our standard of excellence for yellow-fleshed peaches. It is a firm, good-sized fruit that should be in everybody's collection. **Red-rosé** is a high quality, white-fleshed peach ripening at this same time.

Halehaven, another variety from the South Haven breeding program, is a good quality, yellow-fleshed peach to follow **Sunhigh**. The old variety, **Early Crawford**, comes in at this time, too. The **Crawford** series of peaches were standards of quality a century ago, and were grown commercially for a half a century. But the **Crawfords** are unproductive and late coming into bearing, and so gave way to more productive varieties. **Early Crawford** is no exception to this, being unproductive and unreliable in crop.

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George IV, ripening with **Early Crawford**, is a white-fleshed peach with a Vitamin C content that is three times that of most commercial peach varieties. **Champion**, the standard of excellence for white-fleshed peaches, ripens at this time, too. These last three, **Early Crawford**, **George IV**, and **Champion**, are of medium size. They have less red skin color than most of today's commercial varieties, and are consequently often considered to be less attractive. But who eats "looks"?

J. M. Mack, an introduction of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, ripens about one week before **Elberta**. **J. M. Mack** is hardier than **Elberta**, as are all the varieties mentioned so far. **J. M. Mack** is of medium size, has creamy white flesh, and a distinctive flavor and aroma.

The new variety, **Jerseyqueen**, from Rutgers University, belongs in this list of high quality peach varieties. **Jerseyqueen** ripens with **Elberta**. It has large, yellow-fleshed fruit that are very firm, and of good, mild quality. The yellow-fleshed varieties mentioned so far have the older type of peach flavor with quite a bit of acid. Many people today prefer a milder peach. **Jerseyqueen** is such a mild peach, but still has high peach flavor.

White Hale is a white-fleshed peach for this same season. **Honey Dew Hale** is a good white peach with a strip of yellow along the suture. Both **White Hale** and **Honey Dew Hale** will produce very large fruits if well grown.

When we come to the season after **Elberta**, quality depends largely on the weather conditions during ripening. If it is warm and sunny, the fruit will ripen up well; if it is cool with many cool nights, and cloudy, the fruit will not ripen well.

Late Crawford and **Chairs Choice** are two **Crawford** type peaches that ripen a week after **Elberta**. **Chairs Choice** is larger fruited than **Late Crawford**. **Ice Cream**, another introduction of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, is a white-fleshed peach for this season. It has better quality than any other white peach ripening this late.

Autumn is a good quality, yellow-fleshed peach that ripens about two weeks after **Elberta**. **Autumn** is dull and unattractive, but usually ripens up well.

Not all of the above mentioned varieties will do well in all localities. All must be well grown and cared for to develop optimum quality and size. I am sure there are other varieties that should be mentioned for the amateur, but these are a beginning. With the work in progress at the several peach breeding stations and private nurseries, within the next decade there should be an even wider range of material—tree type, flower color and size, fruit shape and color—from which the amateur can pick.

Breeding Hardy Grapes

Elmer Swenson, of Osceola, Wisconsin, reports in the April, 1965 issue of *The Nutshell*, on his progress in breeding grapes for northwestern Wisconsin, where winter temperatures of -30° F. are not uncommon. One of the parents he finds very useful in his breeding work is a hybrid of *Vitis riparia*, Minn. No. 78, developed by the Minn. Fruit Breeding Farm. He has crossed this selection with **Kendaia**, **Golden Muscat**, **Dunkirk**, and **Siebel 1000**. Minn. No. 78 x **Siebel 1000** has given him three hardy seedlings which he will use as parents. Another cross, involving **Seyve Villard 12375**, is also yielding very hardy offspring.