from the fact that the word Prairie was used as the first part of the name of each to designate them as coming from Illinois, the Prairie State. One of these, Prairie Dawn, is still being grown for its early maturity, high quality, and resistance to spring frost injury. All of the six are used in breeding because of their hardiness and resistance to the bacterial spot disease. The Comanche variety, which is extensively grown in Texas, also resulted from this breeding program.

In recognition of his contributions to horticultural science he was elected to Honorary Life Membership in the National Society of Horticulture of France, President of the American Society for Horticultural Science for 1924, and as a Fellow in the latter society. He was awarded the Alumni Award for Distinguished Service by Michigan State College in 1952, the Centennial Citation by Michigan State University in 1955, and the Wilder Medal of the American Pomological Society in 1957.

The Mericourt Pear From Tennessee

B. S. PICKETT*

A new pear variety named Mericourt, developed by the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station, has been released. The crossing and selection work was initiated by Dr. J. A. McClintock, former member of the Horticulture Department, in 1928. Dr. Brooks Drain continued the work when Dr. McClintock left the staff. Following Dr. Drain's retirement a few years ago, the Horticultural staff maintained a close watch on the selections. Among them was one designated as Tenn. 38S63.

Mericourt (Tenn. 38S63) is the result of a cross between Seckel and Late Faulkner made in 1938. Late Faulkner is a chance seedling with fruit characteristics similar to those of Keiffer, and high survival characteristics under Tennessee conditions. Seckel is a small-fruited variety of *Pyrus communis* ancestry with very high sugar content, a dark red blush, and for the species, quite resistant to fireblight.

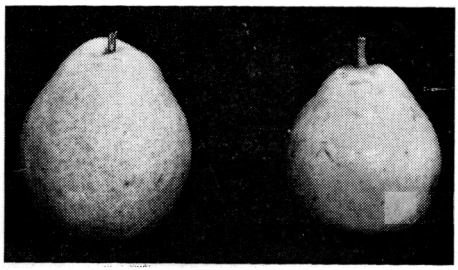

Fig. 1. Mericourt—a new Tennessee pear of high dessert quality.

Seedlings of the Seckel x Late Faulkner cross were planted at the Mericourt Experiment Station at Clarksville, Tennessee. The first recorded fruit was harvested in 1947. In 1952, a replicated planting of the Mericourt clone was made at the Highland Rim Experiment Station at Springfield, Tennessee.

Performance

Yields for the period 1961 through 1965 presented in Table 1 are from the Highland Rim Experiment Station at Springfield. Winter temperatures at this station have varied from a low of —23°F. to the 70's during the month of January and from —7° to above 75° during February. These temperatures provide a severe test of hardiness for pears. Mericourt has survived in the same planting where Duchess failed, and has produced good crops in years that resulted in

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TABLE 1. Yields of Mericourt and Keiffer of the same age and in the same orchard

Year	Mericourt		Keiffer	
	No. of trees surviving[1]	Yield lb./tree	No. of trees surviving[2]	Yield lb./tree
1961	8	24	2	0
1962	8	102	1	132
1963	8	150	1	0
1964	8	210	0	0
1965	8	260	0	0

[1]One of the nine trees planted was not 38S63.
[2]From original planting of nine trees.

reduced crops on Michigan 437. It has also performed well at Lafayette, Indiana.

The pear breeding project of the Tenn. Agr. Exp. Station was designed to produce pears carrying fireblight resistance. Keiffer is considered to be somewhat resistant, or at least to have considerable ability to survive when the disease is prevalent. The Keiffer trees in the orchard at the Springfield Station were killed by fireblight, with only one tree surviving through 1963. However, all trees of Mericourt survived under the same cultural system, and are still vigorous and healthy after 14 years. Fruit production has increased annually since the first measurable crop.

Description of Fruit

The fruit is short pyriform, necked, with green or greenish-yellow skin, occasionally blushed with dark red. It averages 2⅜ inches in diameter and 2¾ inches in length (See Fig. 1). Dots are small and brownish in color. The stem is short, about ¾ inch long, moderately thick, and well attached in a deep, abrupt basin. The cavity is shallow, acute, and medium-broad. The core is very small, and outlined with a few stone cells. The skin is dull, waxy in texture, reasonably smooth in appearance, and underlain with a few small stone cells, not objectionable in number or size. The calyx is open and medium in size. Fruit matures between August 25 and September 9 at the Highland Rim Experiment Station.

The flesh of Mericourt is creamy white, buttery, almost completely lacking in stone cells and abundantly juicy. The flavor is sprightly sub-acid and sweet. Quality is excellent, and outstanding as compared with varieties commonly grown in the South.

Tree Characteristics

The tree is vigorous, and the leaf cover persistent in the presence of a considerable inoculum of Fabraea leaf spot that annually defoliated Duchess and reduced foliage on most of the other clones in the orchard. It had one of the best fireblight and tree vigor ratings of all clones and varieties in the orchard.

Commercial Uses of Mericourt

Fruit of Mericourt is recommended particularly for fresh pear dessert. When canned at its best dessert quality, it tends to soften at the edges of the slices. If canned somewhat before this stage, the quality is still sufficiently high to make a palatable product of good appearance. The exceptional fresh dessert quality—combined with blight tolerance—are the chief merits of Mericourt.

Bud wood is available upon request from the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station, Knoxville, Tennessee.