

Comments on Apricot and Nectarine Culture in Michigan

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Many attempts have been made to grow apricots commercially east of the Rocky Mountains, but without success. Apricot trees were planted at the South Haven Experiment Station late in the last century, but the project was abandoned because of high tree mortality and inability to control the plum curculio.

Investigations in apricot culture were resumed at South Haven in 1939. Varieties from many parts of the world were tested but all failed. Two varieties of Michigan origin (Curtis and SH6) have shown some promise in extensive trial plantings.

Two problems of special importance have resulted in the loss of many trees. These are (1) winter injury to young trees, and (2) the lack of satisfactory, readily available rootstock.

Much has been learned about solving these problems. Details are given in a new Michigan State University Extension Bulletin, "Growing Apricots in Michigan."

Those interested in the possibility of growing apricots in recognized fruit producing areas east of the Rocky Mountains, should proceed with caution and on a small scale only. The hazards involved are great. The growing of apricots in these areas must be considered as still in the trial stage.

Nectarines

Larger-fruited, more attractive nectarines from California, and the New Jersey Experiment Station have aroused considerable interest among

fruit growers, especially those who are successful with peaches.

Experiences with nectarines at the South Haven Experiment Station indicate that the most serious problem in growing this fruit in a climate like Michigan's is the control of brown rot. Nectarines are extremely susceptible to this disease, especially those varieties originating in California, where little trouble is commonly experienced with brown rot.

This disease is not only capable of ruining a large part of the nectarine crop, but may result in many brown rot cankers forming in the trees. Until this disease can be more effectively controlled in areas having a humid climate, the commercial growing of nectarines should be considered as a hazardous undertaking.

The large fruited nectarines are very attractive and have "eye appeal." In general, they are not as good in flavor as freestone peaches. There is little interest in using them for processing. They have been selling for high prices because of their attractive appearance. Whether prices will remain high after a large volume of nectarines is on the market is an unanswered question.

The 1967 convention of the Northern Nut Growers Association will take place in August in Talequah, Okla. For more details about this meeting, write to Spencer Chase, Sec., 4518 Holston Hills Rd., Knoxville, Tennessee.

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