

## Small Fruits for the Home Gardener

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Small fruits have an especial appeal to the home gardener. They are easily grown, are useful and popular for dessert and culinary purposes, and require very little space to produce enough fruit for a family. The spray program is relatively simple. With a suitable selection of varieties of the different small fruits one may have continuous production from the earliest strawberry in June to the last fruits of an autumn-fruiting raspberry in late October if the first frost is delayed. If present trends continue, raspberries, blackberries, currants and gooseberries will be available only to those who grow their own. The acreage of strawberries, too, has declined greatly except on the West Coast. Years ago the low income family could have these fruits in quantity, but not now.

One of the advantages of growing your own berries is having the superior quality of the best flavored varieties. There are a number of good quality small fruit varieties available from nurseries, but the fruit is often not available in the markets.

The Suwannee strawberry is perhaps the best-flavored of all varieties. The plants, now de-virused, are unusually vigorous and productive enough for home use. Fletcher (Midland x Suwannee) has much of the Suwannee flavor, and, in addition, is a heavy yielding variety that freezes well. It is worth growing for market, too. Fortune is early, large, very bright red and rather soft, but should be in every home garden. Fairfax is now an old variety that has survived because of its superior quality. The berries must be at just the right stage of maturity,

not a bit underripe, or overripe, to have the delicious and characteristic Fairfax flavor. Sparkle is good for eating out-of-hand and freezing, and has been widely grown commercially; but the late berries are often too small if the plants are too crowded, as they often are. Empire is good, and very handsome, but soft. Catskill is better than most of the commercial varieties, but its quality is only good. It is a reliably heavy producer of very large, rather soft berries. The verticillium wilt resistance of the plants is an asset for a garden berry that may be planted where tomatoes have been grown. Geneva, an everbearer, is at the top in flavor, but the berries are soft and subject to fruit rot in wet weather.

Red raspberries are pretty much a thing of the past, but they can be grown easily in the northeastern quarter of the country. Cuthbert, once a standard variety for many years, is still at the top of the list in flavor. It is still in existence and virus-free, too. Its offspring Viking, still grown in Canada, is a good quality berry. Taylor is probably the best-flavored red raspberry that is useful for market as well as for home use. Latham, Newburgh and others can be tolerated because the better-flavored sorts, except Taylor, are not available.

Autumn-fruiting red raspberries will get a big boost when N.Y. 696 is introduced in 1969. It is far superior to September and ripens much earlier, about September 1 at Geneva.

Black raspberries are all of good quality. Dundee and Bristol have long been standard varieties. Allen and Huron are new and promising.

Darrow is the best blackberry. It

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crops well and is one of the best in flavor. Blackberry plants must be purchased with care, as a sterile clone has been widely distributed for many years.

Minn. 71, is perhaps the best red current variety; but Red Lake and Stephens No. 9 are satisfactory. Currant jelly is a rare delicacy. Poorman is the best flavored gooseberry.

An excellent method of growing strawberries in the garden is in beds of four rows, a foot apart, with a foot between plants in the row. All runners should be removed as they appear. An inch a week of rain, or irrigation, the year of planting as well as the fruiting year, is essential. Weed control with herbicides, nitrogen in August, and a winter mulch applied before temperatures drop below 20°F are other requirements. The tarnished plant bug, which causes "nubbins" or

berries with seedy ends, should be controlled with a pre-bloom spray of DDT.

Raspberries have been in trouble for a long time because only virus-infected poor performing plants were available. Now that virus-free plants are available, raspberries will grow well and produce heavy crops. Red raspberry rows should be limited to a foot in width by sucker removal. Simazine controls weeds, including quack grass, very well in raspberries and blackberries. In dry years a mulch is worthwhile.

Blackberry fruits are often spoiled by the tarnished plant bug which feeds on the flowers. A pre-bloom DDT spray will prevent this. DDT is also worthwhile on raspberries before bloom, and again just before the flowers begin opening for the fall crop of the autumn-fruiting varieties.

## The Kaller Atemoya

Two years ago Fruit Varieties and Horticultural Digest carried my article about the "African Pride" atemoya in Florida. In that article, it was described as having originated in South Africa, and then being introduced into Australia by Langbecker's Nurseries. Langbecker's has since gone out of business.

Correspondence with Mr. Gordon McNeil of Northern Transvaal has turned up additional information about this variety. Mr. McNeil has contacted Mr. Harrington of Deepdale, Natal, who sent the budwood to Australia. Mr. Harrington wrote him that Langbecker's apparently got names confused and renamed all of the material which was sent them. He further stated that he was not sure which names had been put on which varieties, but that if the African Pride was an atemoya, it must be the "Kaller," which originated in Israel, since this is what he sent. He also said that

the "Kaller" has been a heavy bearing variety for him.

I have also written to Professor Oppenheimer at the Volcani Institute in Rehovot, Israel. He writes that the "Kaller" atemoya tree exists in a Garden in Rehovot, and that it was first propagated about 15 years ago. He further states that the type exists in the collection at the Volcani Institute but has not been grown commercially because other varieties are at least as good.

It now seems fairly certain that the "African Pride" variety should be called the "Kaller."

The "Kaller" is increasing in popularity in South Florida but does not seem to have the potential of becoming a commercial fruit. However, it can still be highly recommended for the backyard garden.—*John Popenoe, Director, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Miami, Fla.; Chairman, A.P.S. Committee for Tropical and Subtropical Fruits.*