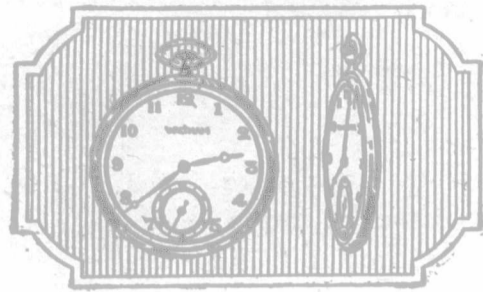


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Some Things Worth Knowing About Apples.

The guide to teachers, issued by the Ontario Department of Education, mentions fruit judging and packing fruit in boxes and barrels as a November topic, and it seems opportune in this connection to mention a few things that may be learned about the apple.

It is well, first of all, to be able to identify varieties, or to name apples as they are found; but names after all do not mean very much. Men and women, boys and girls, all have names, but these names are used only to distinguish one from another. It is the kind of a boy or the kind of a girl, and what he or she is capable of doing that really matters. So it is with apples. Varieties are given certain names so when they go on the market consumers will know whether they are purchasing a cooking apple or a dessert apple, a fall apple or a winter apple, a sweet apple or a sour apple. All this suggests that when a study of varieties is being made, and judging is being done, that we go a little further and study groups of varieties, determine on the time of year when they are in season, and for what use they are best adapted. A knowledge of names only is of little value; it is the quality, character, season, and use to which they can be put which determines their respective values as a food commodity.

We would suggest that a study of apples take the following form. First, learn the different varieties and become acquainted with the characteristics peculiar to the different kinds. After being able to name them, then divide them into groups, such as summer, fall and winter. In the first group would come Astrachan, Yellow Transparent, and Harvest apples, as well as many others. In the fall group would come such as Wealthy, Alexander, Gravenstein. Then there is the winter group which might be divided into early and late winter, according to the season in which the varieties are at their prime.

Another classification which means much to the trade is that which separates cooking apples, such as Baldwins, Greenings, Starks, from those which are termed dessert apples, and usually eaten out of hand. In this latter category would come Spy, McIntosh Red, Snow, etc. This is a very important division of varieties, for dessert apples usually command a very much higher price on the market than do cooking apples. There is an economic feature, or, more properly speaking, a marketing feature, in connection with this. A grower would not, as a rule, bother packing cooking apples in boxes, because the trade does not care for them that way on account of the extra expense involved. It is dessert apples, like Snows or McIntosh Reds, which are wrapped in paper and put up in fancy boxes.

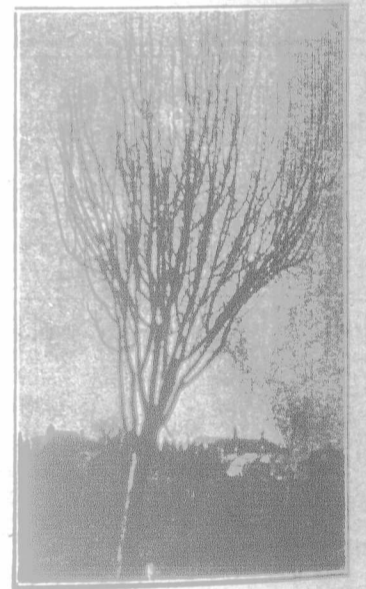
Coming back again to the matter of seasons, one should consider the ability of certain varieties to stand shipment. Duchess, Astrachan and Yellow Transparent are not often shipped very long distances, for the reason that they are not suited for the ordeal, neither are they worth enough money to make it practicable. The Duchess is, however, sometimes shipped from Ontario districts as far as Winnipeg. Fall varieties (occasionally) and winter varieties are shipped to Europe, chiefly Great Britain. This is an important point in the study of apples, for marketing or distribution governs to a large extent the nature of the whole fruit-growing industry.

Questions put to the pupils will elicit replies that convey considerable information. It will probably be said by some pupil that King trees do not bear very heavily, and the same is true about Russets, where the trees are not well fed and taken care of. Ben Davis, Baldwins, and others usually yield heavily every other year, when given half a chance. This, too, is important and has a direct bearing on the varieties that are usually planted.

One can go still deeper into this study of apples or varieties and analyze the conditions under which the tree is planted to give best results. Some varieties, such as the Spy, are said to be self-sterile, that is, the pollen which they produce will not properly fertilize their own flowers, although it is quite potent on the blossoms of other varieties. One can quite appreciate what would happen if a block of Spys were set with no other varieties in the immediate neighborhood. There would be little or no fruit; in fact, there are instances on record where Spy orchards have been non-productive until other varieties were grafted into some of the trees. This question of fertility or sterility in the bloom has not been thoroughly studied, but experiments go to show that the following varieties are more or less self-sterile: King, Northern Spy, Gravenstein, Yellow Bellflower, Spitzenburg and Tolman Sweet. When orchards are being planted this matter should be taken into consideration, and an effort made to not have entire blocks of one variety.

Another point that is worth consideration is the age of a tree before it comes into bearing. Spy trees do not bear, as a general thing, until they are twelve or fifteen years old. Other varieties, such as the Wagener, will sometimes bear the second year after they are planted. Experts are working on this question and endeavoring to recommend certain treatments that will bring young trees into bearing as early as possible, but we need not go into that question here.

We have treated this whole matter in a very brief and sketchy manner. All we wished to do was to point out a few of the interesting features regarding varieties that should be made the topic for discussion in lessons on the apple.



A Young Spy Tree.

What Fertilizers are— What They Do.

BY HENRY G. BELL, B. S. A.

Fertilizers are plantfood carriers, pure and simple. They carry just the same plantfood constituents as are supplied by barn manure, but in larger quantities and in more concentrated form; ammonia, which causes the growth of the straw of grain, the vine of potatoes, and the stalk of corn; phosphoric acid, which increases the yield of grain, hastens its ripening and fills the kernel; and potash, which gives the plant power to resist disease and materially assists in the formation of starch in the grain or tuber, and strengthens straw. Fertilizers carry their guaranteed percentage of plantfood in an available form—that is, in a form in which ammonia, phosphoric acid and potash will dissolve in the moisture of the soil and in the juices of the plant roots. Farm crops cannot feed upon solid particles of soil. In order for food to enter the plant, it must dissolve in water or plant root juices, so that it can be taken into the plant in solution. Fertilizers supply this readily nutritive food to the young plant the same as the cow supplies readily digestible food to her calf.