

SIMON OR APRICOT PLUM.—*PRUNUS SIMONI*.

SOMETHING like a dozen years ago this fruit began to be talked about in North America, although it did not gain any notoriety until six or seven years ago. It had been introduced from France, where it was first described under its present name and with an admirable colored plate, in 1872, by Carrière, in the *Revue Horticole*. I do not know when the fruit reached Europe, but it could not have been introduced long prior to 1872. It was named for Eugene Simon, who sent pits to the Paris Museum while he was representing the French Government in China. It is probably native to China, although Hemsley, in his recent *Flora of China*, does not mention it; but this author evidently adopts Maximowicz's opinion that it is indistinguishable from the nectarine and does not regard it worth distinct

discussion. It was disseminated by Simon Brothers at Metz, in Alsace, and by Thibaut & Keteleer, at Sceaux, France.

*Prunus Simoni* began to fruit in this country about 1885 or 1886. I fruited it in 1886. The fruit was also figured and described in *The Rural New Yorker* in October, 1886. The fruit, which is shown about three-fourth's size in the engraving, is flattened longitudinally, marked with a deep step cavity and a very prominent suture, and is borne upon a very short stem. The color is very intense and striking, being a glowing dark red, slightly mottled with lighter shades. The flesh is yellow, hard, and clings tightly to the somewhat apricot-like pit. The flavor in all the specimens which I have tasted is very disagreeable, being mawkish bitter, and leaving a pronounced bitter almond taste in the mouth. I have never tried a specimen which I could say was edible, and this is an unwilling confession because the fruit is exceedingly attractive to look upon. Other persons appear to have had pleasanter experience with these fruits, for I occasionally read of favorable, or at least only indifferent, comments upon their quality. It is said that its bitterness passes away in cooking, although my experience in this direction has not been re-assuring.

But there are other demerits in this plant besides its mawkish-bitter fruits. It is not a productive tree so far as I have observed, and I have seen it in many different plantations. It bears young but the fruiting is not profuse. Many of the fruits are borne upon spurs upon the old wood, and they are often found well down to the base of the leaf-bearing portions of the top.

The two transcendent merits of the fruit of *Prunus Simoni* are the very