

# The Apples of Ontario

*Evolution of growing and marketing methods---Best varieties---This year's crop.  
Relative variety values---Shipping facts*

By F. M. Chapman, Editor, Farmers' Magazine, Toronto

Superb in dumplings! Prime in pie!  
When baked they tempt an anchorite!  
Supreme in "sass," good even dry,  
But ripe and mellow, peerless quite!  
I know, good friends, it is not right  
Of me to tantalize you so,  
If you're without—I mourn your plight,  
The Apples of Ontario.

There is something in the soil and climate of old Ontario that puts the "tang and smack" into her apples. The blend of sunshine, sugar and protein invigorates and indeed is an antidote to most of our ills. The freedom of the orchard to the growing family and the daily use of this fruit on the tables is as our native poet states, not only a matter of health but a satisfying joy unknown to the dweller in other zones. On hundreds of Ontario's waterfront counties there are many old as well as hundreds of new orchards producing the fruit with this well remembered flavor of former days. He who has moved from here into the western wheat lands carries into his new environment memories of those first yellow Harvest apples, visions still of the red, white-fleshed Snow and the fireside delights of the fall and winter, big red Spies and Kings.

The early plantings of apples were made by the first settlers, in the first place to fulfill the home requirements, and so the wealth of variety and the apples that gave immediate satisfaction came to occupy a bigger area than our present day commercial grower can tolerate. As many as thirty varieties were thus found in many of our old orchards of less than two acres. In my grandfather's orchard on the lakefront of Ontario County, I could count fifteen varieties in one orchard of less than forty trees. We had there: Colvert, Cohashea, Snow, Jenetting, Early Harvest, Astrachan, Greening, Maiden's Blush, Northern Spy, Tolman Sweet, Seek-no-further, Smokehouse, Alexander, Baldwin, Late Harvest and Chenango Strawberry, the most of them grafted upon native stock over forty years ago. And then we, as boys, regretted that we had no tree of Russets, no Sheepskins, no Belleflowers, no Golden Sweets, no Holland Pippins nor Rambos.

On the same farm now with a new orchard for commercial ends in view, the home joys have been curtailed to four varieties, all good shippers—Northern Spy, Greening, Blenheim and Baldwin. And this very well represents the trend of modern commercial plantings of winter varieties.

## Old Methods Being Crowded Out

From earliest recollections the apples of Ontario have been sold by farmers to the dealers who came around in the fall and bought up the orchards at 75 cents to \$1.00 per barrel, the farmer to board the men, help pick the fruit and cart it to the station, and a good market always induced these dealers to ship all grades of fruit without regard to quality, believing that an apple was an apple so long as it left the farm with a whole skin. But this way of doing business was keenly resented by both consumer and grower. This injustice brought the first co-operative association into existence thru the avenue of the Companies Act. Fruit growers clamored for a uniform pack, and so today we have the fairly well administered Fruit Marks Act, two score or more of local co-operative societies, and a Central Co-operative Apple Growers' Association that is raising the standard of the pack, encouraging better orchard conditions, realizing better returns for the farmers and giving the grain grower a better apple for less money.

Of course the opposition put up by these independent dealers was to be expected, and it came. They have done all they could to injure these co-operative associations, their methods have been identical with the methods of similar interests against the farmers' elevators and grain companies in the West. They influenced inspectors in their favor, paid locally higher prices in a few instances to turn farmers aside, and at every turn used the "I told you so" argument to the individual growers, always to the detriment of the co-operative associations. But Ontario farmers are learning the value of a co-operation that can stand together in both poor and good years. And it is well for western

farmers that the East is getting into line in these movements. This dealing direct between growers in Ontario and consumers on the prairies saves the westerner money, dividing the former speculators' profits between the grower and the consumer.

Ontario farmers aim to make the orchards produce better fruit. They try to see the fruit packed

all the early orders must be taken care of first. The early order is most important.

A great many orders for Ontario apples have previous to the war come from Great Britain, France, Denmark, South Africa, Argentina and even Germany. Now this market is largely cut off and some expansion has been given to the Argentine trade as a consequence. New York clamors for our first class Greenings, Baldwins and Spies, paying good prices for our fancy fruit.

## The Difficulty of the Mixed Car

One great difficulty often experienced in filling western orders for carload lots lies in the calling for mixed carloads, with a 50 per cent. Spy specification. The Northern Spy has the universal reputation of being the summum bonum of apple quality. However, there are several other varieties quite as good, and a better acquaintanceship with these would allow of easy carload despatch and more general satisfaction at the receiving end. There are many other varieties that are exceptionally good for cooking and eating.

The Rhode Island Greening is an apple that stands in the front rank as a cooker and goes down well as a table apple. It has a great reputation among Ontario people as a home standby. New York demands vast quantities of them and western people are becoming more and more educated to their good quality. They are good keepers and retain their flavor well thru the winter, coming into use in November. All Greenings should be shipped in cooled cars and kept in cool cellars to be at their best. In fact all apples should be kept after picking in a room with a temperature well down towards the freezing point.

The Canada Red is a good cooker. The Pewaukee, also, as an early winter apple answers very well for kitchen use. The St. Lawrence is a fine early apple but a poor shipper. Alexander is a large early red apple, a good shipper and cooker. Maiden's Blush is a fine early September apple for cooking. The Wagner is a handsome red, good quality winter apple. The Stark is an apple that is coming in more. A large number of western farmers are now calling for Tolman Sweets. This old standby apple is a great baker and boiler as well as a table luxury to many. It ships well, looks well and is particularly free from fungus. There are certain varieties, such as Ben Davis, Gano and Cooper's Market, that no farmer should order for his early winter use. These are handsome red apples and do not come into best use until spring.

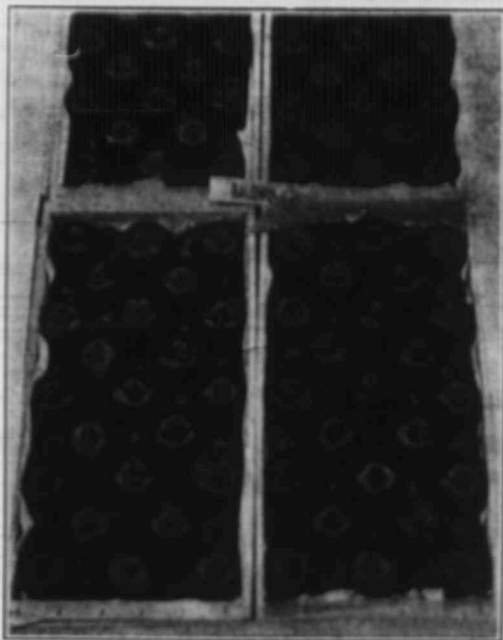
## The Value of Knowing Varieties

It is certain that a greater study of varieties would enable prairie farmers to order more intelligently. Too often the farmer orders Spy or King allowing of no option. Thus the disposal of a carload not quite up to the order presents some difficulties in adjustment. This trouble can well be overcome by a sliding scale of prices that will vary from year to year according as the crop prospects demand. By this suggested table the No. 1 Spies, Snows, Kings and McIntoshes would be in a class by themselves and a difference in the prices made big enough. Usually the flat rate method works out an injustice to many farmers who have to pay the same price for a No. 1 Spy as they would for a No. 2 Greening. Many a buyer would rather take a cheaper apple or agree to take a first class Snow or Spy by paying the extra price. A pamphlet issued by the central to every local would overcome the troubles. Then the orders could go in under this understanding, and when the fruit arrives the farmers could take their choice. By this means Jones or Brown would not have to pay the top price and be forced to take a grade or a variety he did not desire.

## Why Poor Packs Get Past

The question may be asked by some as to why poorly improperly packed fruit gets past the inspectors or leaves some associations. To one who knows Ontario orchards and farms this is quite clear. Poor fruit has reached western markets even from some co-operative associations. Never, to my knowledge, has any complaint not brought redress on fruit shipped out by the central under the "Ontario Flavor" brand.

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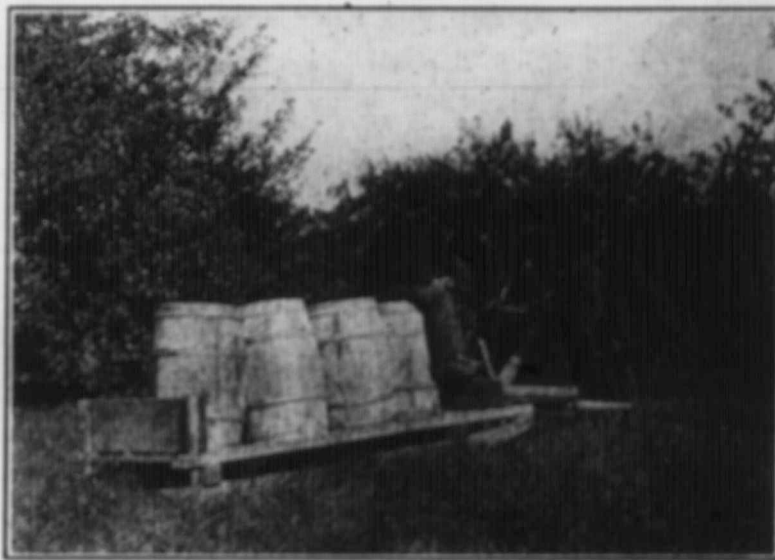
The association's apples are graded and packed under most careful supervision. The box pack is growing in favor.

more uniformly and have it honestly labelled. They ship out under the best of conditions available, and assure as far as possible to the buyer protection that he rarely got from individuals. Only last year \$100 was refunded on a car of apples to a western local G.O.A. by an Ontario organization because of some slackness in shipping and spoiling in transit. This would not have been secured under the old ways of doing things.

The majority of the associations have their packing houses, cold storage sheds and shipping sidings. The apples from the various orchards are taken to the central or local warehouses and there packed under the supervision of one of the company's head packers. The grading is carefully done. Even better marking than the Fruit Marks Act calls for also is urged.

## Early Orders Get Preference

When an order for a carload comes in the fruit is already in storage for filling the car, and soon the transportation company is called upon to hurry the car to its destination. Of course, during September and early October when the big rush is on, late orders are liable to be delayed somewhat, as



In a Lambton County orchard. The packed barrels go to the storage sheds.