

The Canadian Horticulturist

Vol. XXXVI

MARCH, 1913

No. 3

The Best Varieties of Fruit for Ontario Orchards

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Anyone who is at all conversant with conditions in the fruit industry will have noticed an important change in regard to the market demand for certain varieties of apples. Our markets are asking more and more each year for better varieties and better grades. Some of the varieties which were formerly in high favor are being discounted, and indications are that the sorting process will go on even more rapidly in the future. The classes of apples most in demand might be listed as follows: first, early apples; second, large-sized cooking apples; third, fancy dessert apples. It is so easy for one to be misunderstood when one undertakes to recommend varieties for certain districts, that I scarcely feel like making the attempt. However, a few remarks based on the above classification may not be out of place and may throw some light on the variety question.

EARLY APPLES

During the summer months and until middle or late August, our markets are short of apples. There is a good demand for early fruit, most of which is used for cooking purposes only, but the marketing season is comparatively short. It is true that Duchess, for instance, is counted a profitable variety in some of the northern districts, but it is also true that the growing of this variety could be made very profitable in those districts which can put early apples on the market at the earliest possible date.

In my opinion there is an excellent market for such varieties as Yellow Transparent and Duchess, and the best district in which to grow them is the northern tier of counties, including Essex and the southern parts of Kent, Lincoln, and Norfolk. The Niagara District can grow early apples to excellent advantage, and on account of the excellent marketing facilities which obtain in that district it is safe to say that early apples could be grown there in a very commercial way. Any district which undertakes to grow early fruit should possess good shipping facilities. These varieties are picked as soon as they are large enough for cooking purposes and they should go to market in baskets or in boxes.

The most economical apple for culinary purposes is the large one. If this

is of an attractive red color, so much the better. There is a market for this class of fruit from September to late winter, but an apple to sell well to this trade must be strictly first-class and of the best size and color possible. Such varieties as Alexander, Wolfe River, Belnheim, and Spy when well grown always command ready sale.

DESSERT APPLES

The first requisite in a dessert apple is quality, the second is color. The size may be large, medium or small. For the fanciest trade, the small apple is in greatest demand. Even of the large varieties such as Spy, the smaller grade, provided the color and quality are as good, is sometimes more in demand than the larger size. The best commercial dessert apples are Snow, McIntosh, and Spy. These three varieties can be grown to greater perfection in Ontario than in any other province or state on this continent, and I advise that they be made the three leading varieties.

In my opinion, the best chances for financial profit in apple growing lie in the production of high-class dessert fruit. The three varieties mentioned and a few others which might be mentioned as belonging to this class, if well grown, are always in demand and can be depended upon to sell at good figures.

The low prices of the past season have shown that some old favorites do not possess sufficient quality to command ready sale. Even the Baldwin was discounted heavily last season, and it is certainly not over-stating the matter to say that Baldwin does not possess sufficient quality to commend the best class of trade. I am quite aware that at the present time Baldwin is being more extensively planted in this province than any other variety. At the same time, there are districts in Ontario in which such inferior varieties as Ben Davis, Gano, and Stark are at the top of the planting list. I do not wish to advise in the matter, but if present indications count for anything, it is certain that profit in apple growing in the future will depend more upon quality than ever before.

Following are brief notes concerning varieties which may be added to the foregoing lists of dessert and cooking varieties of apples:

Cayuga Red Streak (commonly called

Twenty-ounce).—A large, early fall apple of splendid cooking quality and splendid color; extensively grown in Western New York, thrives splendidly in southern Ontario, and would grow much farther north, as the tree is decidedly hardy.

Rhode Island Greening.—An old standard and still highly desirable. In my opinion it is a safer variety to plant than Baldwin, and just here I should like to say that in selecting varieties it should be the aim of each planter to pick only those which are believed to be the most profitable sorts. If one looks over the list and selects the few of which one feels most certain, there is no necessity of going further or of planting varieties in any way inferior. Simply select the best.

Tolman.—Another old favorite which hitherto has not been in large demand on the market. It is now being asked for, especially for the north-west, as a sweet winter apple for baking purposes.

DESSERT VARIETIES

Gravenstein.—A September dessert apple of the finest quality, also first-class for cooking purposes. It drops somewhat badly, but possesses splendid color and is an all-round attractive and desirable variety where one of this season is desired.

Grime's Golden.—A splendid mid-winter dessert and cooking variety for southern Ontario.

OTHER VARIETIES

Besides those mentioned, there are a few varieties, such as King, Ribston, Golden Russet, and Wagener, which possess valuable qualities. King and Golden Russet are notoriously shy bearers unless planted on rich land or heavily fertilized. With good care, it might be possible to cultivate them profitably. Ribston is a late fall or early winter dessert apple of excellent color. The tree seems to be only moderately hardy. I should be glad to learn the experience of growers of Ribston over the province, as it is a variety which seems to possess every desirable quality. So far as I have observed, it is not widely grown except in one or two districts, and I should like to know if it cannot be cultivated over a much larger area of western Ontario.

Wagener is a mid-winter, high quality, dessert variety, considerably resem-