

LETTERS FROM RUSSIA IX.

URIUCK APRICOT.



IN the Russian provinces of Central Asia, Bucharia, Chive, Turkestan, and even as far as the boundary line of China, is met, both in the wild and the cultivated state, a variety of apricot, known locally as Uriuck. As I am better acquainted with the Semirechenskaja district, with its principal town Vjerny, than the other districts in Asia, I will, therefore, make some observations on this apricot as grown in that locality. I think it necessary to observe that Vjerny and its suburbs have a climate subject to great drought in summer and extremely cold north-west winds in the winter, and frequently there are very sharp changes from heat to cold.

The Uriuck apricot is growing at Vjerny in wild situations in the woods, where there are still to be found very old trees which endured the severe winter of 1877. They have thick trunks about one meter in diameter, with low, broad, but roundish, heads. But such giants are only left in protected places. The cultivated Uriuck is grown in the gardens of Vjerny, as also in other places in Asia, entirely from seeds. Previous to the occupation of this country by Russia, the Uriuck was the chief fruit grown in local gardens. Now the inlanders have learned from the Russian people how to grow other varieties of fruit also, especially the popular Alexander apple. They sow the seeds of the Uriuck directly in the place where they wish the trees to grow, usually in the time of the season when fresh gathered from the fruit, spring planting not being so favorable. The Uriuck does not bear transplanting well, because the trees thereby become more bushy and liable to injury from gumming. As soon as the stone opens, it sends out long, vertical roots, which take hold deep down in the ground and supply the plant with water during the extreme heat of the summer. The seedling soon grows up, if there is sufficient moisture, and throws out lateral twigs on the lower part of the trunk. The seedling should be pruned in the second or third year, or else these lateral twigs dry up and render the trunk unsightly. In the third year the seedling usually blooms for the first time, the flowers being small, white, or rose-colored, and in the fourth year it bears fruit. The Uriuck blooms earlier than other fruit trees and sheds its bloom sooner. The time of ripening of the Uriuck at Vjerny begins in July; the wild variety in the mountain ripens later. The color of the Uriuck is orange yellow, blushed on sunny side, though not always. In the ripe fruit the stone parts freely from the flesh. In taste, some are sweet, juicy and aromatic, not inferior to our apricots, others are inferior in quality.

There are many varieties of Uriuck which, in general terms, may be divided into wild and cultivated. Usually the wild Uriuck bears a small fruit, oftener