

To obtain it in the pink of perfection, it should be picked from the tree as soon as the fruit has attained its full growth, and just as it begins to turn from green to the ripening condition. When left beyond that period the ripening process goes on in favour of the seeds, and its qualities rapidly deteriorate. A pear ripened on the tree is not fit to be eaten. Even a day or two too long in the summer varieties renders it dry, flat and insipid. Fall and winter fruit, after gathering, which it is desired to keep any length of time, is best preserved in barrels or, better, in boxes, containing about a bushel, in a cool or cold, dry place. When desired for use, to insure its highest perfection, it should be ripened in a dark, dry place in a moderate temperature, and rigidly excluded from the air. Proper thinning on the tree is an essential point in obtaining well conditioned fruit, and placing it between layers of flannel is a secret in developing colour and flavour that is worth knowing. A pear should never be eaten warm. Cooled in the refrigerator in summer and eaten at a temperature between warm and cold in the winter, it is at its perfection, and those who have never tasted some of the finer varieties under these conditions have a pleasing lesson to commit to memory.

There are pears that are pears. The average consumer, generally speaking, is acquainted with but a few of the commoner varieties to the exclusion of the really fine sorts. The Seckel, Bartlett, Lawrence, Howell, Flemish Beauty, Belle Lucrative, Sheldon, Duchesse and Beurre d'Anjou, are perhaps the best known and most salable market varieties. These, at least the majority of those mentioned, are but the lower grades of this really delicious fruit, and no more compare with many of the finer sorts than a crab or a Gilliflower apple does to a Spitzenburg or Northern Spy. The Seckel and Bartlett both have a pronounced musky flavour. They suit the average American taste because they are sweet and strongly flavoured, for the same reason, doubtless, that the American palate demands a sweetened and alcoholic wine, or discards olive oil in favour of sugar in the salad. Their popularity, as that of most of the above sorts enumerated, is also no doubt largely owing to the fact that only comparatively few are acquainted with the better kinds, and are, therefore, unable to establish a comparison. While many really excellent varieties have originated in this country, the French and the Belgians must be credited with the majority of the really superior varieties.

SUMMER VARIETIES.

Beginning with the summer sorts that rank high in the gamut of taste, the Petite Marguerite, recently introduced in France, is especially deserving the attention of the amateur. Its juicy and vinous flesh and delicate bouquet, all entitle it to a place in the well-regulated private orchard. It is not large, a trifle larger than the Seckel but large enough, according to the writer's taste, for a dessert pear. Of the larger summer pears, the Clapp's Favourite, originated in this country and a cross between the Bartlett, an English variety, and the Flemish Beauty, a Belgian sort, should not be overlooked. It is entirely free from the muskiness of its English parent, and considering its size and other really fine qualities, one might look much farther and fare worse. It is said to rot at the core too quickly. This is obviated to a great extent by early gathering. Of the many other summer sorts, the handsome red-cheeked Beurre-Giffard, the Rostiezer, a vinous, high-flavoured sort, comparatively a stranger to American collections, and last, but not least, the Tyson, which is much better known, bring up the rank and file among the very early pears.

With the change from the hot summer weather to the mellow and cooler days of autumn, we at once note a difference for the better in the quality of the fruit, which seems to become imbued with the vinous richness of nature's harvest season, the fall sorts having more character, piquancy and flavour. Of this class, it is an extremely difficult matter to choose between several varieties. Whoever has been fortunate enough to taste a Beurre-Superfin, fully matured, ripened to a nicety and glistening in its bright, smooth, oily skin, needs look no farther for the acme of perfection in the pear. It is as juicy as a peach, and eating its fine-grained and highly perfumed and flavoured flesh reminds one of nothing more than drinking a delicious dry champagne. It fully merits its appellation "super-fine." Like many good things it will not keep long. But were it possessed of the virtues of the amaranth, we doubt whether that would prove much in its favour, as a supply of Buerre Superfins would scarcely last except under lock and key.