

THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST

MAY, 1903

VOLUME XXVI



NUMBER 5

GREEN GAGE

THE Green Gage is a good representative of a very important group of domestic plums, which is both very ancient and very desirable. Other well known varieties of the Green Gage group are Reine Claude, Imperial Gage, McLaughlin, Jefferson, Washington, General Hand, Peter's Gage, Golden Gage, etc.

In Ontario the most popular variety of the Green Gage group of plums, especially for cooking purposes, is the Reine Claude de Bavay, commonly known among us as Reine Claude; but in the catalogue of the American Pomological Society called Bavay. The fruit of this plum is larger than that of the Green Gage; the tree is a stronger grower and hence perhaps better suited to the commercial orchard, but in quality no one of the group excels this old typical kind, the Green Gage.

Dr. Robert Hogg, author of the "Fruit Manual" of Great Britain, gives the following history of the origin of this plum:

This universally known and highly esteemed fruit has been longer in this country (England) than has been generally supposed. It is said to have been introduced at the beginning of the last century by Sir Thomas Gage, of Hengrave Hall, near Bury St. Edmunds, who procured it from his brother, the Rev. John Gage, a Roman Catholic priest, then resident in Paris. In

course of time it became known as the Green Gage plum. In France, although it has many names, that by which it is best known is Grosse Reine Claude to distinguish it from a smaller and much inferior plum called Reine Claude Petite. The Green Gage is supposed to be a native of Greece, and to have been introduced at an early period from Italy, where it is called Verdochia. From Italy it has passed into France, during the reign of Francis I., and was named in honor of his consort, Queen Claude. Shortly afterwards it found its way into England under its original Italian name, Verdochia, from which we may infer that it was brought direct from Italy. It is mentioned by Parkinson in 1629 under the name of Verdoch, and from the way in which he speaks of it, it seems to have been not at all rare, nor even new. Even so late as the middle of the last century, after it had been reintroduced and extensively grown under the name of Green Gage, it continued to bear its original title, and to be regarded as a distinct sort from the Green Gage.

If any of our readers is making a selection of plums for his home garden, we would advise him not to omit a tree of the Green Gage for kitchen uses; or, if he wishes to combine both kitchen and market purposes, then let him plant the Reine Claude.

The Green Gage tree is not a rapid grower, but it is healthy and fairly productive. The fruit is smaller than Reine Claude, and must be thinned to make it reach a proper size. The skin is greenish, yellowing toward ma-