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TREE FRUITS FOR THE HOME ORCHARD

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Choosing varieties

The choice of varieties is one of the most important considerations in setting out an orchard or small fruit plantation. With orchard trees, especially, one must assume whether he wishes to or not, something of the role of a prophet and look into the needs of the future as far as possible. The important varieties of today may be superseded by better ones in the course of twenty or twenty-five years, and sometimes sooner. On the other hand, we have many fine varieties that have been favorites for a much longer period than that. It is not best to "take a flyer" as the expression goes, in any new variety until it has been thoroughly proved, but one should foresee as much as possible what the trends of popularity are and govern himself accordingly. In recent years there has been a tendency to develop high-colored fruit in place of some of the less gaudy and possibly better-quality favorites of the past. The choice of different varieties will depend upon several factors, such as climate and soil, hardiness of the variety considered, pollination needed, whether the fruit is to be grown for home use or for commercial purposes, and so on.

Importance of climate

Climatic conditions are undoubtedly the most important of these several factors. This is naturally coupled with hardiness of the particular varieties to be considered. Oregon may be divided roughly into nine different climatic sections, each one varying somewhat from the others in its requirements and in the varieties that will succeed best. West of the Cascade Mountains the question of hardiness is not of supreme importance, but east of that mountain range this question should be carefully considered. Within a few miles of the Columbia and Snake rivers and in the extremely northern part of Umatilla county many varieties can be grown to advantage which are too tender for planting on the higher plateau region of eastern Oregon. On this plateau it is only here and there along protected water courses or sheltered spots that even the hardier types of fruits will succeed. When they do succeed, however, they usually have excellent quality and fine finish. When we speak of hardy varieties we refer to those which succeed in most districts outside of the extremely high, frosty ones of the plateau region. There are a number of apples, pears, sour cherries, prunes and plums which do well where the winter temperatures get quite cold, provided, of course, the approach to winter is gradual enough so that the wood becomes well matured before extreme cold weather comes on.

Soils and exposures

Soils and exposures should be chosen with care. North and eastern exposures warm up slowest in the spring and are least apt to suffer damage from late spring frosts, while south and west exposures give somewhat better color. There should be enough slope to the land to allow cold air to drain off readily during the winter and spring. This does not mean steep slopes, but it does mean that low spots where cold air may settle should be avoided. Generally speaking, stone fruits do better upon rather sandy to silty soils that are not too heavy, and which are easily worked, while such fruits as apples and pears make their best growth and production upon soils containing considerable clay, which are well drained, with subsoils not too heavy.

A soil which may not be ideal for commercial fruit growing may often be given tile drainage, special fertilizing, or some other treatment which will adapt the location for a home fruit planting.

Planting time

Time of planting nursery stock will depend upon the variety, soil, and climatic conditions. In western Oregon the winters are so mild that most fruits and nuts can safely be planted any time during late fall, winter, or early spring whenever the plants are thoroughly dormant and the soil is in good working condition. In the colder parts of the state, spring planting is safer.

Plants set in the fall or winter usually have their roots more firmly established in the soil when time for spring growth comes than do plants which are set out in spring. Therefore, fall and winter-planted trees usually make a better growth through the first year at least.

Pollination

The question of pollination is an important one. Most of our common tree fruits need cross-pollination to do their best. Generally speaking, most apples and pears are successfully pollinized by varieties which bloom at the same period. Most of the European plums and prunes, including the French and Italian, are fairly well self-pollinized, but a number of varieties, such as the Japanese group and the American plums need cross-pollination.

The Franquette is the leading commercial variety of walnuts. It pollinizes itself whenever the pistillate flowers mature early enough to catch the pollen. In young trees and in older trees in some seasons there is not sufficient overlapping of pollen to set good crops. A late-blooming strain of Meylan has been found to be an excellent pollinizer for Franquette. Seedlings which bloom at the right time may be good also. Mayette needs cross-pollination in some cases.

Filbert varieties have to be chosen carefully to provide cross-pollination at the right seasons of the year. The Barcelona, our leading variety, sheds its

pollen too early to make it a pollinizer for other common varieties. The DuChilly has been one of the outstanding pollinizers for the Barcelona, as has Daviana, also. The DuChilly, in turn, needs cross-pollinizing by a variety which has its pollen borne later than the Barcelona, so a third variety must be brought into the picture. The Daviana, White Aveline, Montebello, Nottingham and a number of other varieties have been found to be satisfactory pollinizers. The Brixnut filbert is successfully pollinized by the Bolwyller.

Our most common sweet cherries, the Royal Ann, Bing, and Lambert, will not pollinize each other, and another variety, usually the Black Republican, is set in for that purpose. The Black Tartarian, Governor Wood, and a few others have been fairly successful as pollinizers. It is necessary to get a true Black Republican for successful pollination. This can be done by choosing buds or scion wood from Black Republican trees which have caused trees around them to set good crops.

Most sour cherries bear very well when set in solid blocks, but now and then a strain appears which does not bear well by itself. It is a good precaution, therefore, to provide cross-pollination for sour cherries.

The common varieties of quince pollinize themselves.

Peaches are self-pollinized with the exception of some strains of J. H. Hale and one or two other minor varieties. Nectarines (fuzzless peaches) are self-pollinized also.

Apricots, also, are self-fruitful. (See footnote.)

Varieties

The following varieties were selected with the aim of providing fruits that are desirable for the home orchard. Many of them, of course, are found in the commercial orchards of the state. The varieties are generally adapted to Oregon conditions. It must be borne in mind that not all the varieties will thrive in all parts of the state. Some will thrive in some areas but may fail in others. Because of this fact it is always wise to consult local horticultural authorities before making a final choice.

Apple

Summer:

Yellow Transparent, Red June, Red Astrachan, Jeffries.

Fall:

Gravenstein, King David, Creswell.
Fameuse and Wealthy are desirable at fairly high altitudes.

Footnote: A plant is self-fruitful when fruits are produced by its own flowers without cross-pollination.

Apple (continued)Winter:

Delicious, Golden Delicious, Jonathan, Ortley, Grimes, Yellow Newtown, Rome Beauty, White Winter Pearmain, Talman Sweet, Winesap.

If one is interested in increased red color the red sports of Delicious, such as Starking and Richared, may be more desirable than the parent variety.

Crab Apple

Hyslop, Martha, Whitney, Hoba, Dolga, Large Red Siberian, Transcendent.

PearEarly:

Clapp Favorite, Bartlett, Louise Bon de Jersey.

Late:

Bosc, Anjou, Comice, Seckel, Winter Nelis.

Quince

Champion, Orange or Apple.

Sweet Cherry

Royal Ann, Bing, Lambert, Black Tartarian, Deacon.

Sour Cherry

Montmorency, Early Richmond, English Morello.

Duke Cherry

May Duke, Late Duke.

Peach (Freestone)Early:

Arp Beauty

Mid-season:

Golden Jubilee, Valiant, Slaphey, Rochester, Early Crawford, Elberta, Early Elberta, Improved Elberta, Haleshaven, Muir, Champion.

Peach (Freestone) - (continued)Late:

Salwey, Krummel (recommended only for warm sections.)

Peach (Clingstone)

Tuskana (Tuscan), Lemon, Miller.

Clingstone peaches are not well adapted to the Willamette Valley.

Nectarine

Queta, Goldmine, New Boy.

Nectarines do well in parts of Southern Oregon but are not adapted to the state as a whole.

Plum and PruneDrying:

Italian, Date, Miller's Sweet, Imperial, Weatherspoon, Silver Prune.

Canning:

Washington, Jefferson, Shiro, Green Gage, Italian.

Fresh Use:

Peach Plum, Formosa, President, Wickson, Mariposa, Climax, Tragedy, Columbia.

Jams and Jellies:

Shropshire (Damson)

Apricot

Tilton, Blenheim, Moorpark, Lewis, Perfection.

The variety known as Chinese is worthy of trial, even though its performance is not known for many parts of the state. Apricots are adapted only to limited areas in Oregon.

Fig

Lattarula, Granata, Severala.

King is worthy of trial although new to Oregon.

NutWalnut:

Franquette, Mayette, Meylan.

Franquette is the outstanding variety in Oregon.

Filbert:

Barcelona, DuChilly, Daviana, Brixnut, Halle's Giant,
White Aveline.