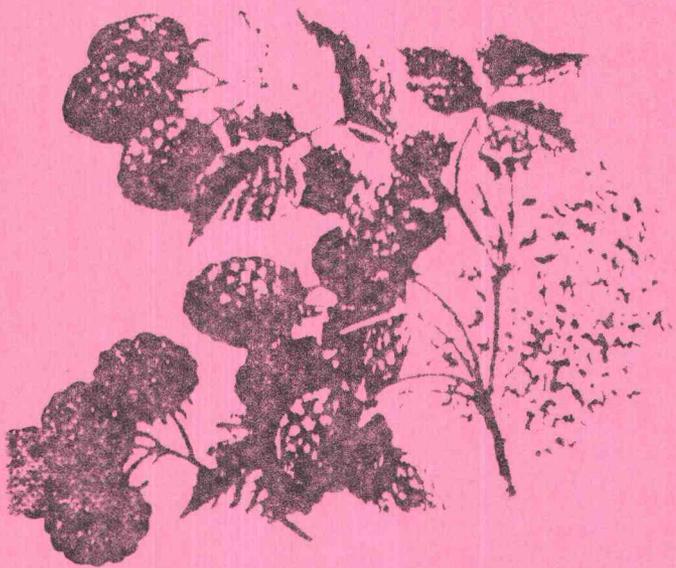


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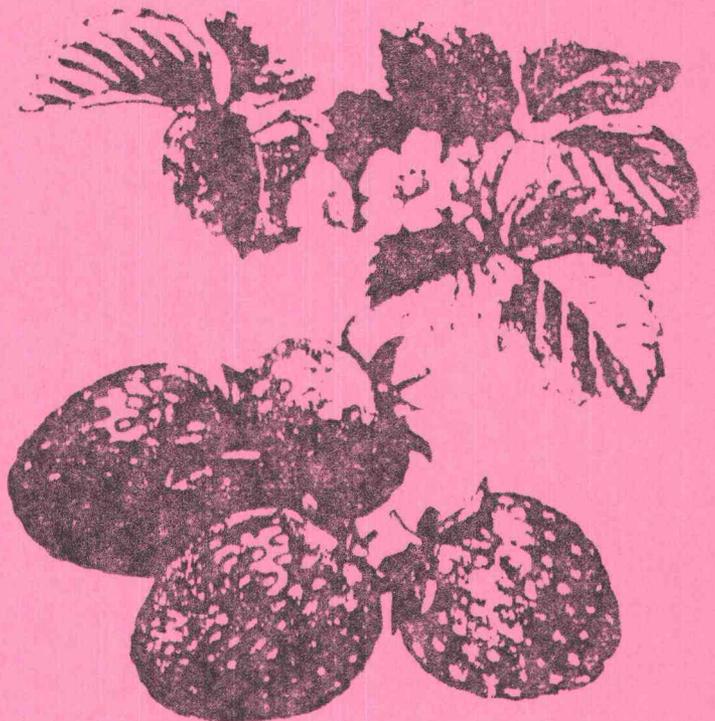
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PRODUCTION



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FRUIT PRODUCTION IN CENTRAL OREGON

Possibilities and Difficulties

by Marvin M. Young
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February 1979

Among the first questions asked by home gardeners moving to Central Oregon is, "What kinds of fruit can I grow here?" The answer is often disappointing.

Central Oregon has a very short growing season. It averages from 95-100 days in the Madras area, 80-90 in Redmond and Prineville, and 80 or less in Bend. The Tumalo-Sisters area may range from 75-80 depending upon location and closeness to the Cascade Range. Areas south of Bend to LaPine and the higher elevations realize progressively shorter seasons. Frosts can occur any day of the year. Frosts are expected in elevations above 3700-3800 feet at amazingly frequent intervals.

In addition, frosty nights occur quite regularly during the time of year when most fruit trees are in blossom. Therefore, the question is, "How often should we expect a fruit crop?" rather than, "Which fruit trees can survive?"

In most cases trees of the apple, pear, plum, cherry, peach, apricot etc.; species will survive but often fail to bear fruit.

Grower's experiences have developed some commonly held probabilities for fruit production as follows:

Apples: once every 4-5 years

Pears: once every 5-6 years

Ple (sour) cherries: most years a partial crop, occasional failure

Peaches: occasional partial crop. Not dependable

Wild plum: two out of three years

Sweet cherries: generally unsuccessful

Apricots: unsuccessful

Nut trees: trees winter kill

Strawberries: very successful

Raspberries: successful

Blackberries: fairly successful

Blueberries: fairly successful with certain care called for

Currants & Gooseberries: successful

There can be striking climatic variations within short distances in Central Oregon. Air currents, canyon walls, rock outcrops, etc., are known to create micro climates. Some homeowners may experience nearly annual production of some fruit, for instance apples, while their neighbor may experience annual failure only a short distance away.

Peaches present another consideration. Peach trees are a primary host for the green peach aphid. This same aphid carries a destructive potato disease called leafroll. Aphids can travel great distances and cause problems particularly to certified potato seed growers. Persons anticipating planting peach trees may wish to consider the possible threat of disease in potatoes as opposed to the possibility of fruit production.

Dwarf trees are becoming popular in many fruit varieties. Dwarf trees do not change the winter hardiness or bloom period of fruit varieties. However, their reduced size may increase the possibility of providing protection during the bloom period. Temporary or permanent structures have been devised by some home gardeners determined to increase the odds for successful fruit production. The addition of minimal heat in these structures such as light bulbs has often been helpful during the blossom period. Maintain openings to allow insects in for pollenization.

There may be some slight advantage in selecting fruit varieties that bloom later in the spring or over a longer period in an attempt to miss the frost. However, late blooming varieties also tend to be late maturing, and the spring advantage is lost to fall weather.

For those who wish to try their luck with fruit trees and other fruits, the following variety suggestions are offered:

Strawberries - *Everbearing: Gem, Ogallala, Rock Hill Ozark Beauty*

June Bearing: Northwest, Vale

Raspberries - *Summer: Conley, Meeker*

Fall: Indian Summer, September (yellow berry)

Blackberries - *Thornless evergreen*

Plums - *Wild shrub plums, Green Gage, Blue Damson*

Pie Cherries - *Early Richmond, Montmorency*

Apples - *Yellow transparent, Waxen, Melba, McIntosh*

Pears - *Anjou, Tyson, Clapps Favortie, Barton*

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