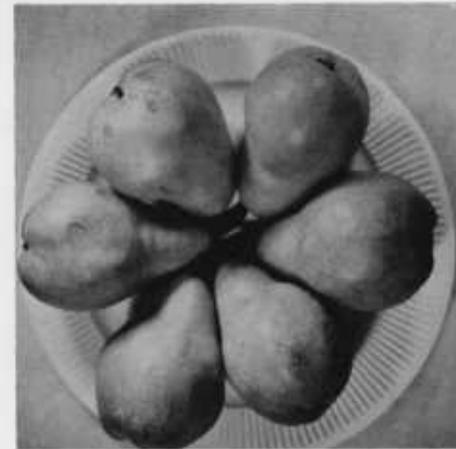


The El Dorado Pear In Oregon



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This variety, which is not well known outside of California, originated about 1925 as a chance seedling in a fence row near Placerville, California. Later, J. A. Winkelman obtained grafting wood which was subsequently propagated at Medford, Oregon, in 1948. The El Dorado has not gained prominence in California, but it is being planted on a limited commercial basis in Oregon.

The El Dorado is a winter-type pear which fits well into the late marketing season. It is harvested just after Anjou and usually with Comice. The fruit is distinctly pyriform in shape, often resembling the Bartlett variety, clear skinned, with a moderately long, flexible stem. The fruit is as large as Bartlett, and the flesh is essentially free of stone cells. The skin attains an attractive pale yellow color when ripened.

In storage tests, El Dorado has not developed scald or core breakdown. The fruits have stored well at 30° F. until April and May. Unlike Packham's Triumph, it has not been susceptible to scab and blight or storage scald. Taste tests indicate that it is equal or superior to Comice in dessert quality. The fruits are moderately free of blemishes and russetting and resist mechanical injury as well as Bartlett and Anjou. Shelf life is as long as Anjou and longer than Comice or Packham's Triumph. The fruit also resists pressure and friction bruising.

El Dorado is a non-patented variety and limited amounts of scionwood are available. This variety is likely to be grown more widely in the future, in preference to Anjou and Packham's Triumph, because of its high quality, attractive appearance, and late-keeping characteristics. The fruit surface is smooth in contrast to the rough or bumpy appearance of Packham's Triumph. The fruit is more oblong-pyriform and less ovate or acute-pyriform in shape than is typical of Packham's Triumph when grown in Oregon. Tests show that it is not a satisfactory canning variety.

Preliminary data indicate that El Dorado should be cross-pollinated for best quality and fruit shape. Its blossoming period is very close to Anjou, Bartlett, Doyenne Gris, and Packham's Triumph. El Dorado has been found to be pollen compatible with these varieties and, hence, any one of them would be satisfactory as a pollinizer. Likewise, El Dorado may also be used as a pollinizer.

Limitations

Among the many varieties that have been tested by the Experiment Station over the past years, the El Dorado appears currently to be the most promising new winter-type pear variety. While the Experiment Station cannot recommend the planting of this variety on a large scale at the present time, it is of the opinion that the variety is at least worthy of limited commercial trial -- bearing in mind that it is one of the few survivors of many cultural tests as well as of critical appraisal of handling. Final judgment of El Dorado as a commercial variety depends upon its performance under a wide range of cultural conditions in commercial orchards over a long period of time and its acceptance by the trade and consumers.

Availability of Planting Stock

Neither the Department of Horticulture nor the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station will have trees available for general distribution. Growers interested in obtaining trees or scionwood should contact nurserymen who are now propagating this variety. Most Oregon nurserymen who customarily propagate pear trees will soon have stock available. The Experiment Station will have only a limited quantity of scionwood for distribution in 1963 and 1964 to propagators who wish to establish mother block trees or to bonafide growers who may be interested in making a few grafts for testing purposes only. Arrangements to obtain this scionwood should be made through the local county Extension agents.

Ideal Characteristics

A new variety must fulfill a number of rather exact requirements if it is to withstand the rigors of present-day competition, and if it is to ultimately gain trade and consumer acceptance. It is only the exceptional variety that has a chance to succeed under these conditions. Some of the more important requirements of a commercial pear variety are:

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| 1. Eye appeal | 6. Size and shape of fruit |
| 2. Dessert quality | 7. Stem characteristics |
| 3. Shelf life | 8. Yield and grade of fruit |
| 4. Tree characteristics | 9. Freedom from diseases and
physiological disorders |
| 5. Fruit handling characteristics | 10. Trade and consumer acceptance |

To thoroughly evaluate these characteristics will require several years of experience with a sufficient number of trees in full production. Growers are reminded that the planting of any new variety involves some element of risk. Hence, they should proceed with caution and a full knowledge of the facts that are available.