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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

When the Conquistadores arrived in the New World and commenced the work of colonization, it was natural that they should long for the cereals, the fruits, and the vegetables which had played such an important part in life in the Mother Country. Little time was lost in attempting to remedy this situation, notwithstanding statements by numerous modern authors that all they thought of was Gold. Columbus himself, on his second voyage, brought seeds to the West Indies. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, the first historian to write at length of such matters, tells that in the 1520s grapes grown from cuttings brought from the homeland were growing on the island of Santo Domingo. He says they were white grapes, "I have eaten them myself, and they are as large and delicious as those of Spain."

The great Cortés, while still engaged in the conquest of Mexico and neighboring regions to the south, wrote in his fourth letter to the King (1524): "I have already made known to your Imperial Majesty the necessity of bringing to these lands plants of all kinds...and I repeat the request, hoping that orders can be given to the Casa de Contratación in Sevilla ~~that~~ to the effect that every ship must bring plants, and that no ship shall be allowed to depart without them."

Peaches from Spain prospered in many regions. Grapes gave the colonists much trouble; oftentimes they started off satisfactorily but when planted in patios of stone or adobe houses, but when attempts were made to develop commercial vineyards problems almost insurmountable appeared, a condition which remains to this day in the region between Mexico City and Lima. Apples doubtless arrived in Mexico during the early colonial period, and proved reasonably successful on the high plateau near Mexico City, as well as at high levels along the Andean

chain into lower South America. European pears were established in the same regions as apples, most probably at the same time. The plums of Europe did not succeed; it remained for the Japanese plums, which arrived in California about 1870 and were carried thence to tropical America some years later, to save the situation. Apricots and cherries have not proved wholly satisfactory in the strictly tropical parts of America. Another job for the plant breeders!

After those early introductions it seems probable that very little new material was brought across the Atlantic for a couple of centuries or even more. Transportation of grafted trees on sailing vessels was difficult. In the meantime, improvement of fruit varieties had taken place in ~~xxxxxxwestern~~ western Europe, from which regions, from which regions immigrants to the Americas brought ~~plants~~ better apples and pears. Not much interest was shown in peaches, because descendants of the ~~xxxx~~ seedlings planted in Colonial times produced fruit which was ~~satisfactory~~ well-liked by everyone.

Throughout tropical America, the regions in which Temperate Zone fruits, of the ~~kindxxxx~~ varieties then available (some ^{or by} were true varieties grown from ~~xxxx~~ suckers ~~xxx~~ grafting, others were seedlings) had been determined by trial and error. Commercial orchards of any size were scarcely ~~xxxxxx~~known.

The great abundance of "Spanish" peaches, large and small, white and yellow fleshed, clingstones and freestones; their adaptation to a wide range of altitudes; the way they stand rough handling in transportation and on the market; and their ~~subacid~~, pleasing subacid flavor - such factors as these seem to have kept peaches from receiving serious attention at the hands of horticulturists. In the past few years, ~~however~~, some of the "melting flesh" ~~types~~ types from California and Florida have been introduced for trial. It seems certain that some of these are bound to become popular, because of good size, handsome appearance, and superior quality.

Interest today centers, ~~however~~, in "canning clings". There are hundreds of seedling "melocotones" (large, yellow fleshed clingstones) in Central America and doubtless in other regions. These are commencing to appear on the market as canned "halves". Selection of the best seedlings and their vegetative propagation has commenced.

The great abundance of "Spanish" peaches, large and small, white and yellow fleshed, clingstones and freestones; their adaptation to a wide range of altitudes; the way they stand rough handling in transportation and in the market; and their subacid, aromatic flavor, such factors as these, ~~plus the failure of the northern~~ ^{varieties} ~~peaches in tropical America,~~ ^{kept} have prevented peaches from receiving ~~serious attention at the hands~~ of horticulturists. One would think that attention would have been given to selection and vegetative propagation of some of these "tropical" peaches, but up to now little has been done. In the past few years, however, some of the "melting flesh" type of peach from southern California, ~~and those produced by Ralph Sharpe in Florida,~~ ^{and from} have been introduced for trial, ~~it is almost certain that~~ this type of peach is going to become popular, because of good size, handsome appearance, and rally superior quality.

Interet today centers, however, in "canning clings". There are hundreds of "melocotones" (large, yellow fleshed clingstones) in ~~many~~ Central America and doubtless ~~elsewhere~~ in other regions. ~~They~~ ^{are} They are commencing to appear on the market as canned "halves". Selection of the best seedlings and their vegetative propagation has commenced, - ~~it probably would have come earlier had it not been for that time was required to demonstrate that the "canning clings" from California have been unsuccessful in tropical America in strictly tropical regions, even at the~~ altitudes where the other Temperate Zone fruits are doing so well.

Apples

mention pollination

Winter Banana
Gravenstein
Jonathan
Wealthy (Juarez - Ben Davis)
~~Crabapples~~

Pears

mention fine slight

Baldwin
Hood (Kadman)

Summer Doyenné (Tecpaneca
Large Clapp Favorite?
Redonda Lincoln?
Doyenné de Cornice
Bosc

Plums

There are other
good ones

Santa Rosa }
Mariposa } good cross pollinizers
Satsuma }
Perhaps Kelsey - Reina Claudia
(Shiro) thrown out for color.
Methley (Española)

Peaches

Earlygold and Saturns tested
Flordawood trial
Fox trial - Borita, Flordasun,
Maygold, Rochon, Suwanee
and Tejon
Local melocotones

Winter--And Bloom Is on the Mango Tree

By NIXON SMILEY
Herald Staff Writer

In the cold North the flowering of orchard trees is associated with spring, but here in South Florida we have no such trees to show us a marked change in the seasons.

Take the mango, for instance. These trees began flowering in Dade County over three weeks ago, even before fall was officially over.

It was on Christmas Day that I found my own trees beginning to bloom — extending their panicles into the warm sunshine.

When you see your mango trees coming into bloom, you can't help counting the fruit you hope to harvest next spring and summer, if you really like this luscious tropical fruit.

For there is no other fruit like it in tangy, individual flavor; and if you sample a 100 mango varieties, every one will have its own special quality. I have 10 varieties and I'm always amazed at their difference in flavor.

It is seldom that all 10 varieties begin blooming at the same time, as they have done this year. Nor do mango trees always bloom fully



on all branches as they seem to be doing now.

A mango is a curious kind of tree. Its flowering time each year may vary as much as two or three months; and there may be a succession of bloom on various parts of the tree. When this happens there is a succession of crops of fruit.

This may be desirable for those of us whose cultivation of the mango is limited to a few dooryard trees, but it can be exasperating to a commercial grower who must return to the grove to harvest each successive crop.

Why is the mango blooming so early and so profusely this year? Could the tossing of the branches by Hurricane Betsy in September have anything to do with it?

In some parts of the trop-

ics the owners of mango trees hack on the trunks with machetes and axes to induce them to flower and bear fruit. It's not a very scientific procedure, and there is no proof that it works. Yet, the universality of the practice indicates some grounds for this treatment. In Jamaica this slashing of the mango tree gave rise to the following doggerel:

"A woman, a dog, a mango tree;
"The more you beat 'em the better they be."

But no matter how many blooms a mango tree may be induced to produce, this is no guarantee that it will yield a heavy crop of fruit.

A tree produces thousands of flowers for every fruit set. It is not uncommon for a mango tree to cover itself completely with bloom and fail to set a single fruit, especially in Florida where weather conditions are sometimes uncertain.

A cold wave could kill the pollen and prevent a fruit set. Rain or heavy morning fogs could visit the area at just the right time to set up fungus disease in the flowers, resulting in the loss of the tiny fruits as they form.

Although there have been seasons when the fruit set was light, I don't recall of a year passing that my trees didn't produce enough for our use. Ordinarily the first fruit, a Saigon variety, begins maturing in late May or early June, and ripening of other varieties continues until the late Keitt variety is ready to harvest in September.

I don't know of any other fruit tree capable of giving more pleasures than the mango.

There is the initial pleasure of watching the trees as

they push out their panicles of orange-yellow flowers on foot-long, lacquer-red stems. As you walk past the striking display the activities of thousands of bees, wasps and other insects drawn by the nectar and pollen hum in your ears.

If you are interested in insects, you can stand near the flowers and study a great variety of surprising form and color in these little critters. There is little likelihood of being stung.

The insects are interested in their work, not in you. And many of the insects you

see on mango flowers are incapable of stinging anyway.

After the setting of the fruit there is the pleasure of watching the progress of its growth, from the size of a pea to the richly colored mature fruit, which you anticipate with mouth-watering enthusiasm.

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