

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

Winter 1996-1997

Volume 11, Number 4

President and Editor: **Dwight Bradley**, 22008 Voyles Blvd., Chugiak, AK 99567. Phone 688-1268.

Vice President: **Bob Boyer**, P.O. Box 9-1376, Anchorage, AK 99509. Phone 561-2885

Secretary and Treasurer: **Pam Neiswanger Warner**, 7000 Viburnum Dr., Anchorage, AK 99507. Phone 344-9749.

Board Member at Large: **Eric Simpson**, 162 Creekside Dr., Sequim, WA 98382

JANUARY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The January meeting will be held at the regular time and date, Thursday, January 16, 1997, 7 PM, at Boyer Photography (2813 North Star, between Northern Lights and Gamble, a block west of Matanuska Dairy). Bob Boyer has received several new fruit-growing videos.

SUGAR CONTENT OF ALASKAN APPLES AT THE SEPTEMBER 1996 APPLE-TASTING

by *Dwight Bradley*

In the last Newsletter I reported on the September 1996 apple tasting, but forgot to include data on the sugar content. Bob Boyer took a slice of each apple that we tasted and squeezed a bit of juice into an refractometer, which measures sugar content in brix (I don't find "brix" in my dictionary). So here again are the apples, this time in order of sugar content; the average tasting score (on a scale of 1-10, with 10 highest) is also given.

The sweetest apple was an unknown crab, which looked like Dolgo, with a brix of 17. It wasn't a particularly sweet-tasting apple; in fact it was puckery-tart. This and the other top finishers did not do especially well in the taste testing. The two top finishers in the tasting, Ginger Gold and Oriole, did have fairly high sugar contents, but so did a lot of mediocre varieties.

Some of the varieties with low sugar contents simply weren't ripe. Others, such as Westland and Heyer 12, were plenty ripe and just never do get much sweeter than the ones we tested.

Refractometer measurements like these will come in handy in selecting varieties to mix for sweet and hard ciders with the proper balance. Novosibirski Sweet has great potential as a sweetening variety because its acid content is so low.

Variety (with initials of grower in some cases)	Sugar content	Avg. tasting score (1-10)
Unknown crab	17	5.2

10th & E	16.75	6.6
Centennial	16	5.3
Canada Red	15	7.2
Golden Trans.	15	6.5
Novosibirski Sweet	15	5.7
Yellow Jay	15	7.0
Parkland	14.5	7.5
Ginger Gold BB	14	8.6
Harris mystery	14	7.0
Hazen LC	14	6.9
Oriole	14	8.5
Root mystery	14	5.9
Heyer 20	13.5	5.9
State Fair	13.5	8.1
Unknown huge green	13.5	6.0
Vista Bella	13.5	6.8
8th & M	13	7.1
Hazen	13	6.1
Rosthern 12	13	6.4
Summerred	13	7.4
Westland LC	13	5.3
Golden Trans.	12.5	6.2
Norland	12	6.3
Parkland	12	6.9
Pristine	12	7.2
Red Duchess	12	6.3
Unknown Knik N	12	6.6
Unknown Knik S	12	5.7
15th St.	11.5	7.7
Geneva Early	11.5	5.0
Trailman	11.5	5.3
Yellow Trans. HH	11.5	3.9
Adnac	11	5.7
Gravenstein	11	6.7
Mantet	11	5.9
Red Duchess	11	6.2
Westland KF	11	6.9
Westland VV	11	5.8
Joyce	10.5	5.8
Mantet KF	10.5	5.9
Red Trans.	10.5	6.4
Y. Trans. KF	10.5	4.4
Jersey Mac	10	6.2
Yorks Greening	10	4.8
Heyer 12	10	6.0
Summerred	9	5.9

FEBRUARY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The February meeting will be held at the regular time and date, 7 PM on January 16, 1997, but the location is still to be determined. The theme of the meeting will be fruit exploring on the World Wide Web. There is a lot of useful information on the web — for example, on fruit growing, diseases, soil science, and climate (see following pages). There have been a couple of articles in recent issues of Pomona about websites of interest. However, many of our club members either don't have a computer, or don't have access to the internet. What we still need is a volunteer with internet access who would be willing to host the February meeting. Judging from normal attendance at mid-winter meetings, there might be anywhere up to ten people, so it would help to have room for that many to gather around the computer. If you are familiar with some interesting websites, please try to make it. If you would be willing to host the meeting, give Dwight Bradley a call at 688-1268.

ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF CLUB EVENTS

The Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers holds eight meetings each year. For the benefit of new members, here is what usually happens each year. On the third Thursday of October, November, January, February, and March, we hold monthly meetings at 7 PM, at Boyer Photography, 2813 North Star, Anchorage. In early April, usually on the first Saturday, we hold our annual grafting workshop at Dimond Greenhouses. On the third Thursday in May is our annual orchard tour, hosted by a fruit grower in south-central Alaska. In late September, usually the fourth Thursday, we hold an apple-tasting of Alaska-grown apples: in the past few years this has been hosted by the Bradleys in Peters Creek. There are no meetings in June, July, August, or December.

As editor of the Newsletter, I try to send out an announcement that will arrive a few days before each meeting. However, job commitments sometimes have to come first; a few months back I had to mail the meeting announcements while I was on a business trip to Maine, and a few people didn't get their notices until it was too late. So, if you haven't gotten a meeting announcement by the time of a meeting date, give me a call at 688-1268.

— Dwight Bradley

SWEET SIXTEEN APPLES RIPEN IN ANCHORAGE

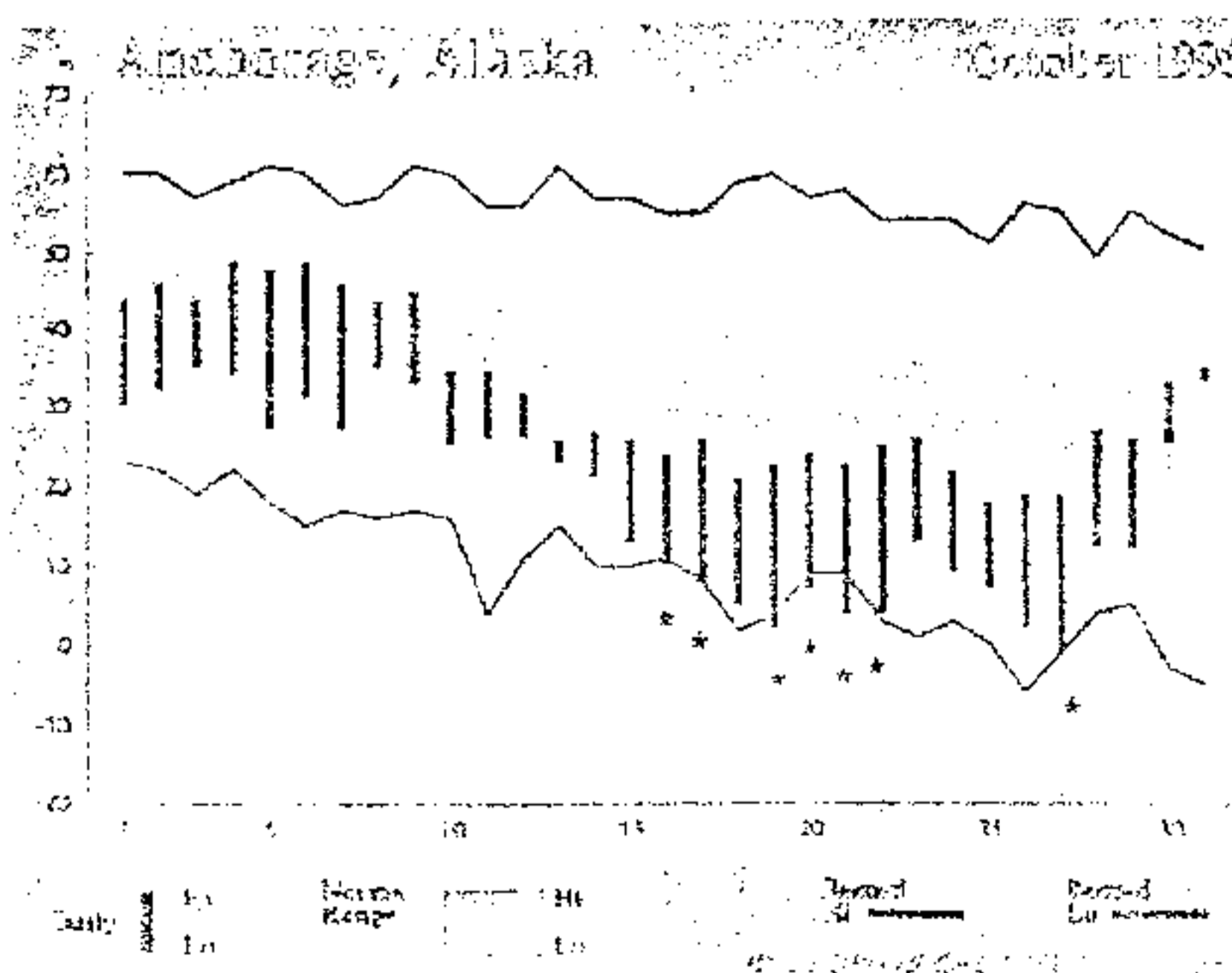
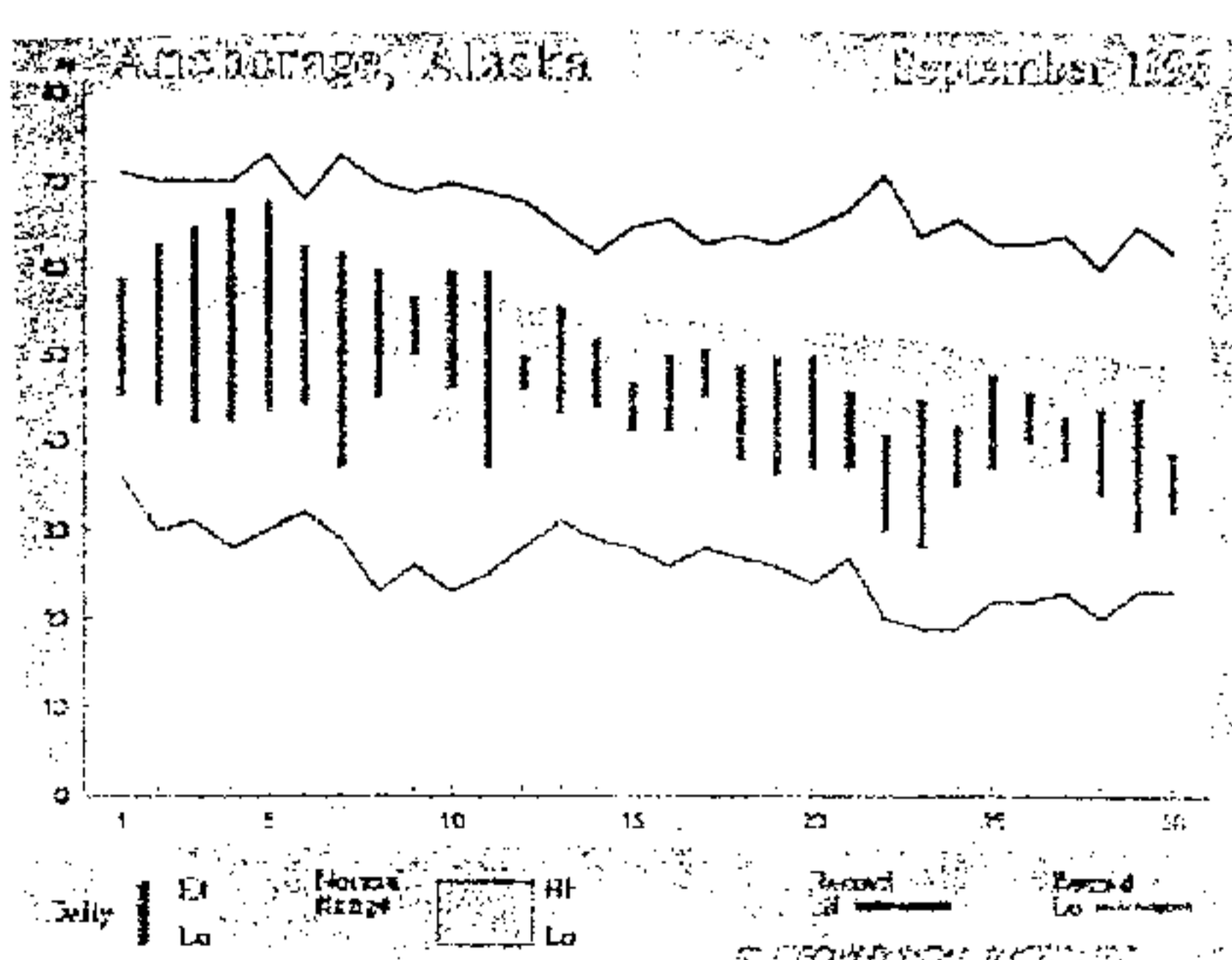
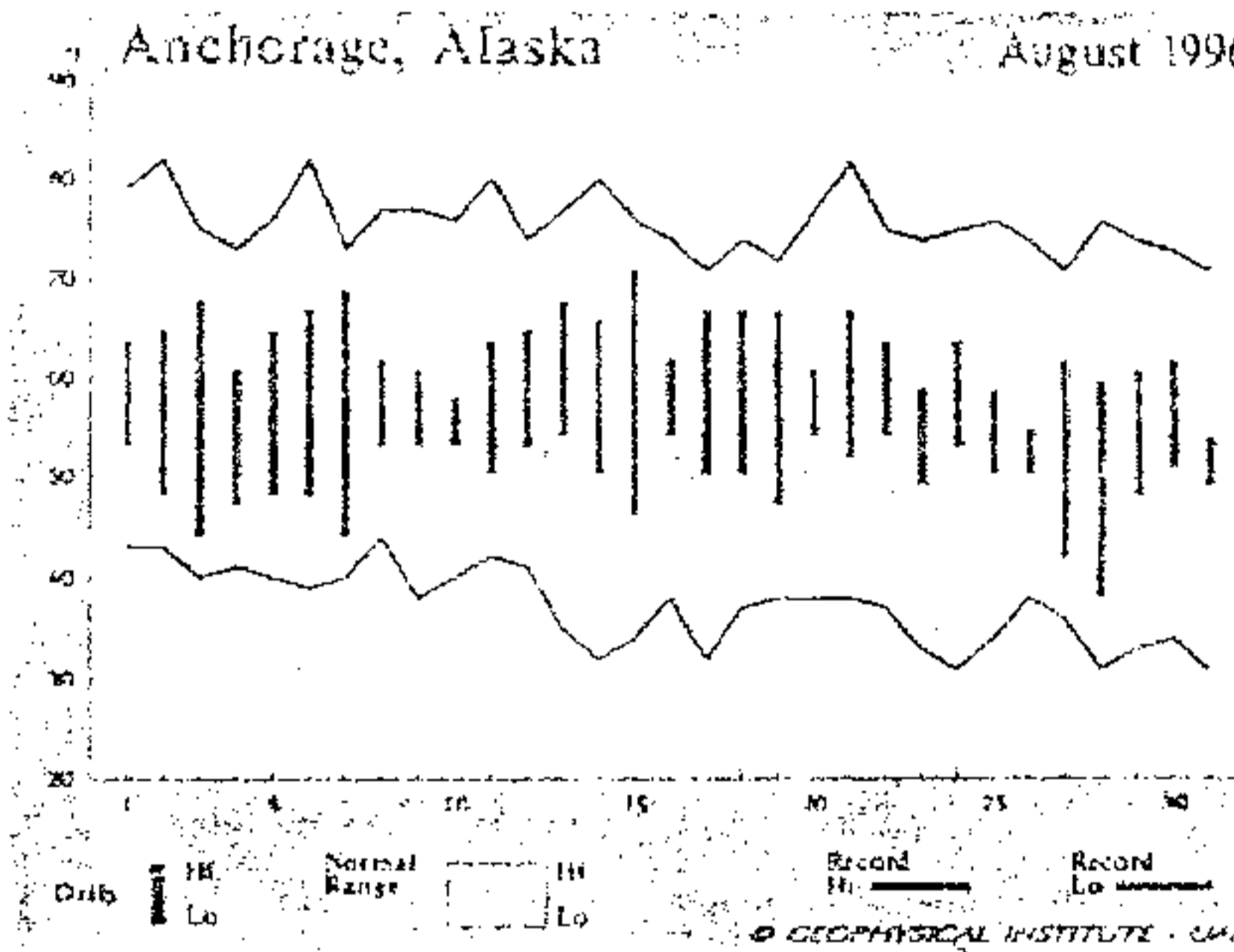
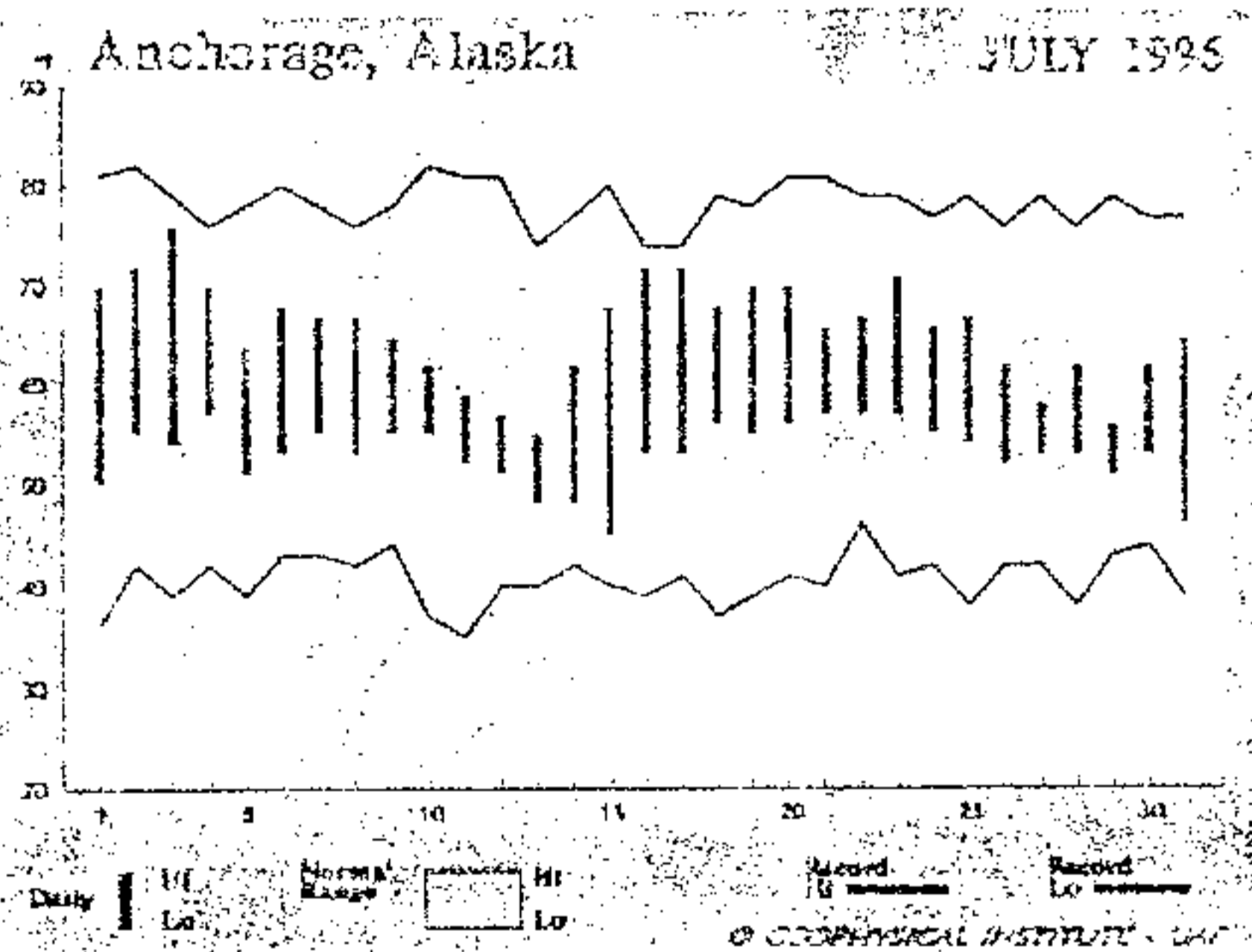
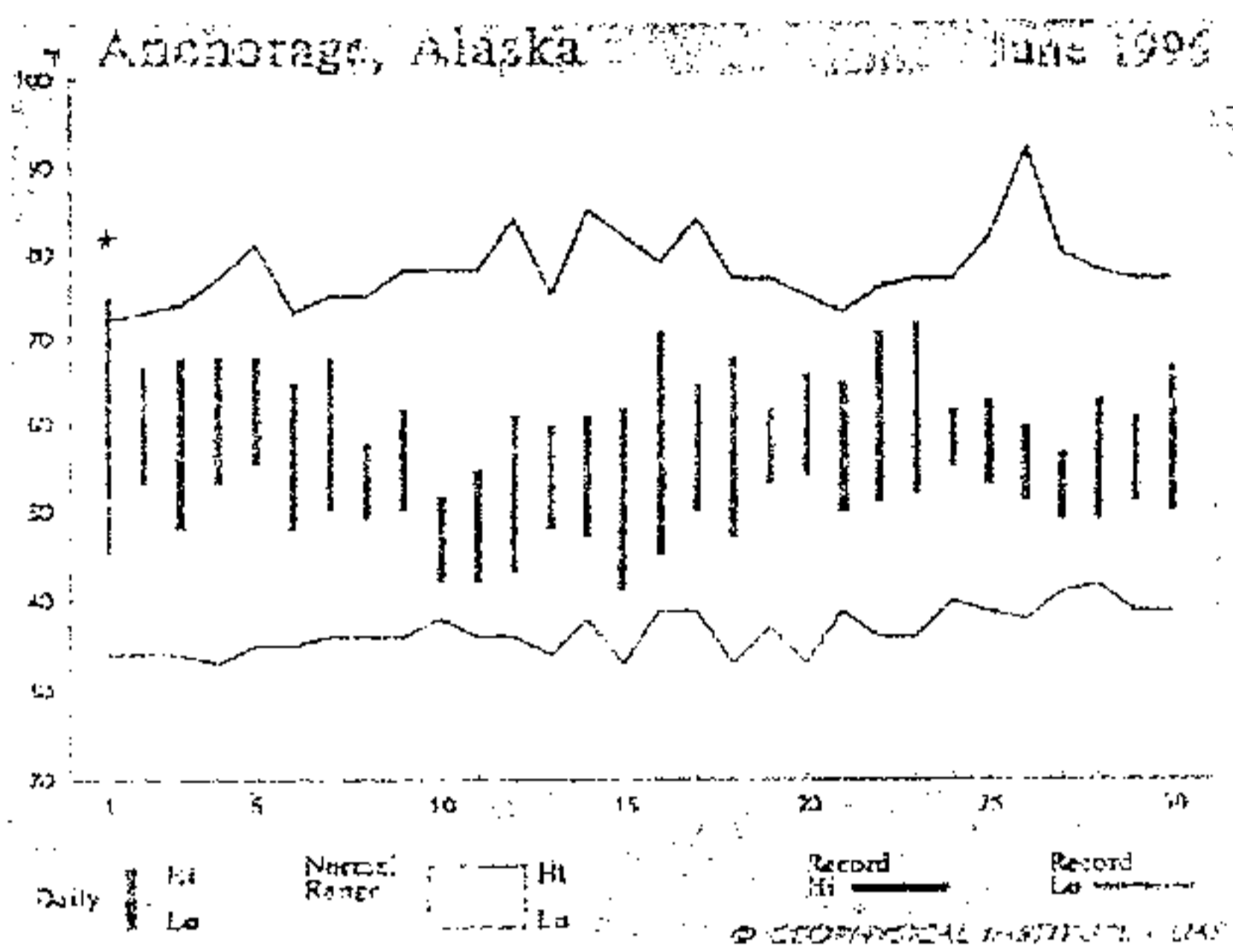
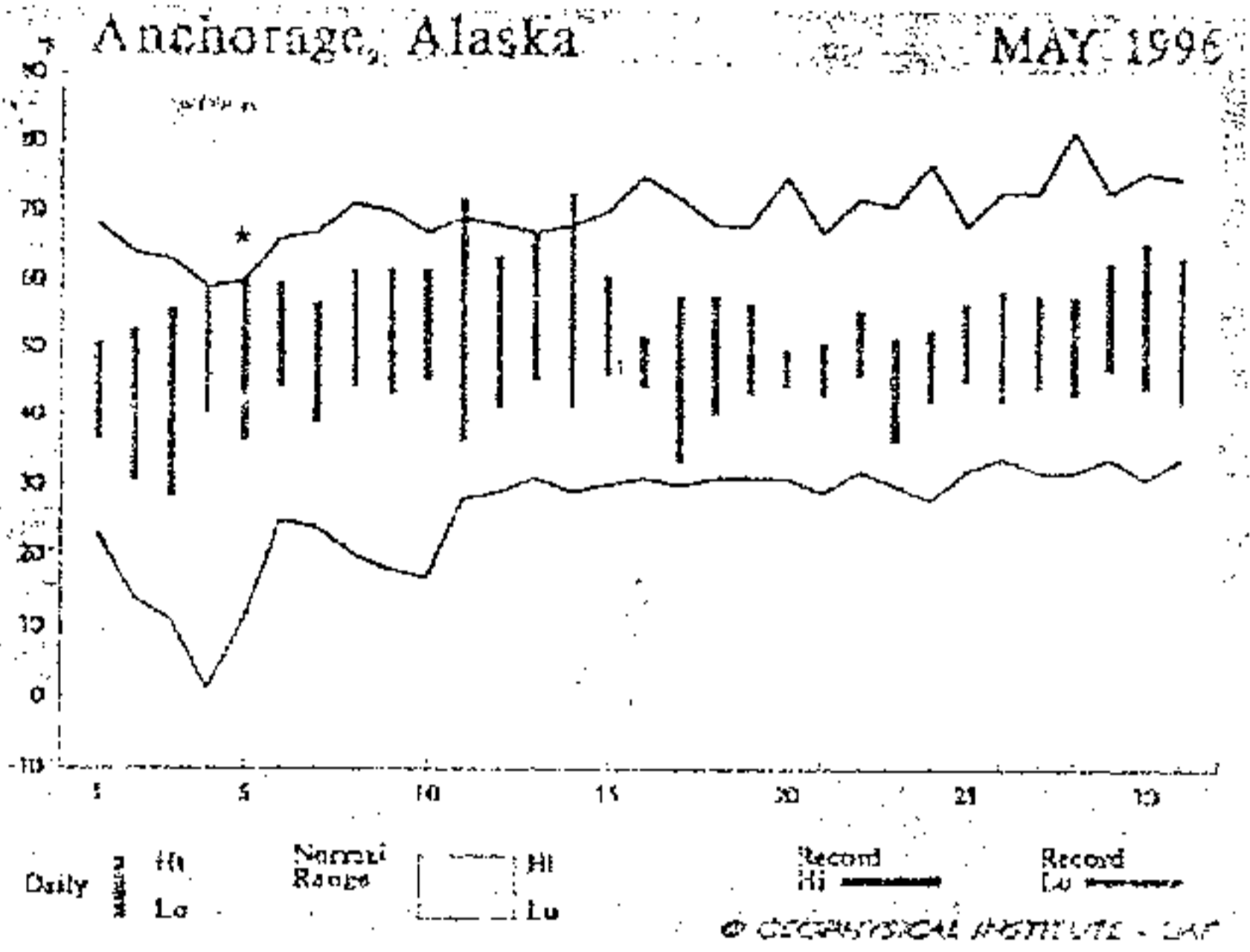
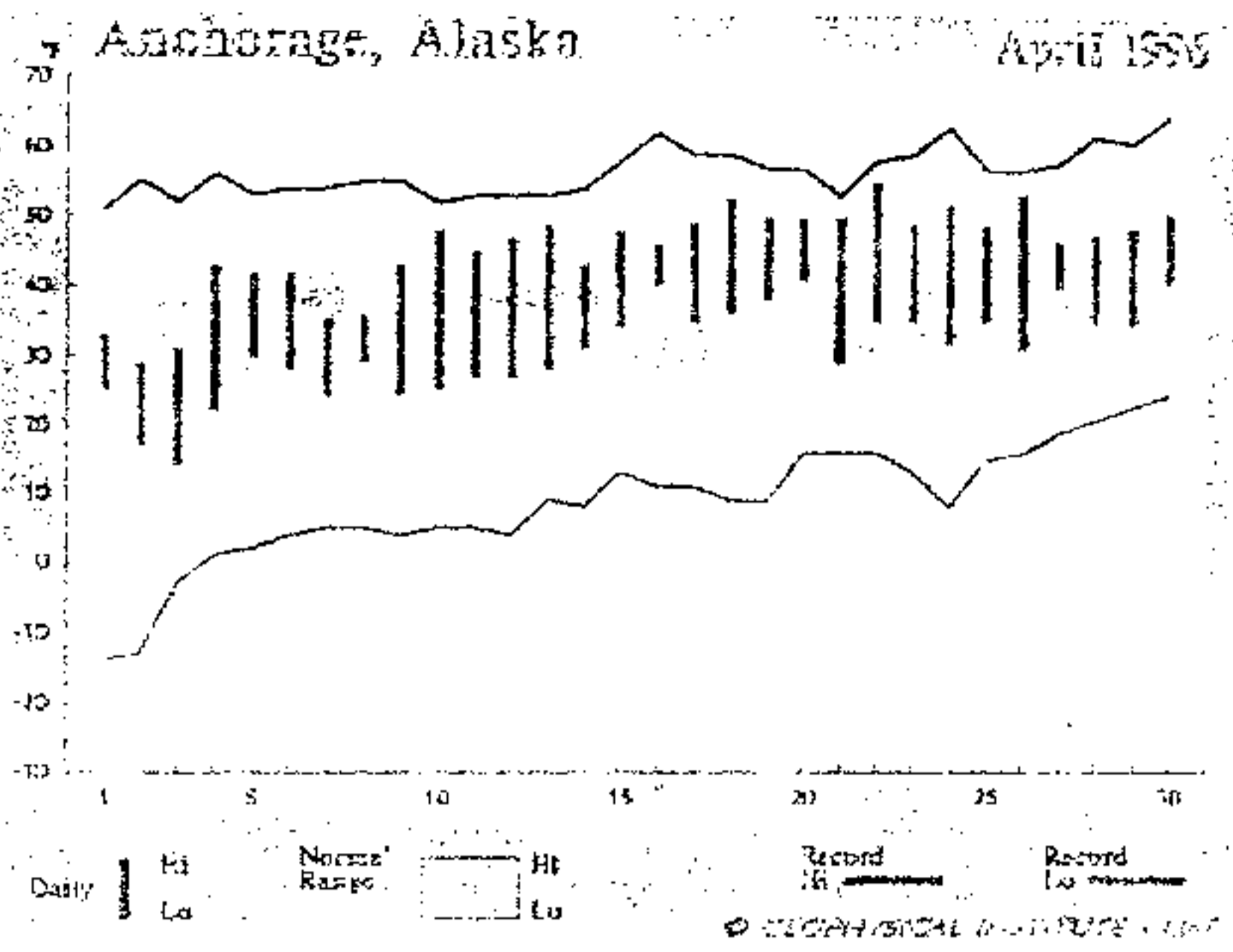
A few years ago, Bob Boyer topworked Sweet Sixteen onto an old Siberian crab growing in Tony Route's backyard near 8th & M just west of downtown Anchorage. The tree is one backyard north of the "8th & M mystery apple" which has been mentioned in past newsletters. The topworked tree is many decades old, possibly as old as the 8th & M mystery tree, which supposedly was planted around 1920. Tony Route reported to Bob Boyer that the Sweet Sixteen branch (or branches) bore ripe fruit this past fall. This is certainly welcome news, because Sweet Sixteen is a top quality apple that does well in the Zone 3-4 tier of northern New England and Minnesota.

ALASKA WEATHER AND CLIMATE DATA ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The Alaska Climate Research Center at University of Alaska, Fairbanks, has a website with lots of useful data on recent weather and long-term climate trends for selected Alaskan locations. The address is <http://climate.gi.alaska.edu>. The graphs on the following two pages show some of the temperature information that can be found at the website. In addition, tables give the following information for each of about 20 locations: normal monthly precipitation, average number of days with measurable precipitation, cloudiness (avg. number of days clear, partly cloudy, and cloudy), average relative humidity, and average wind speed.

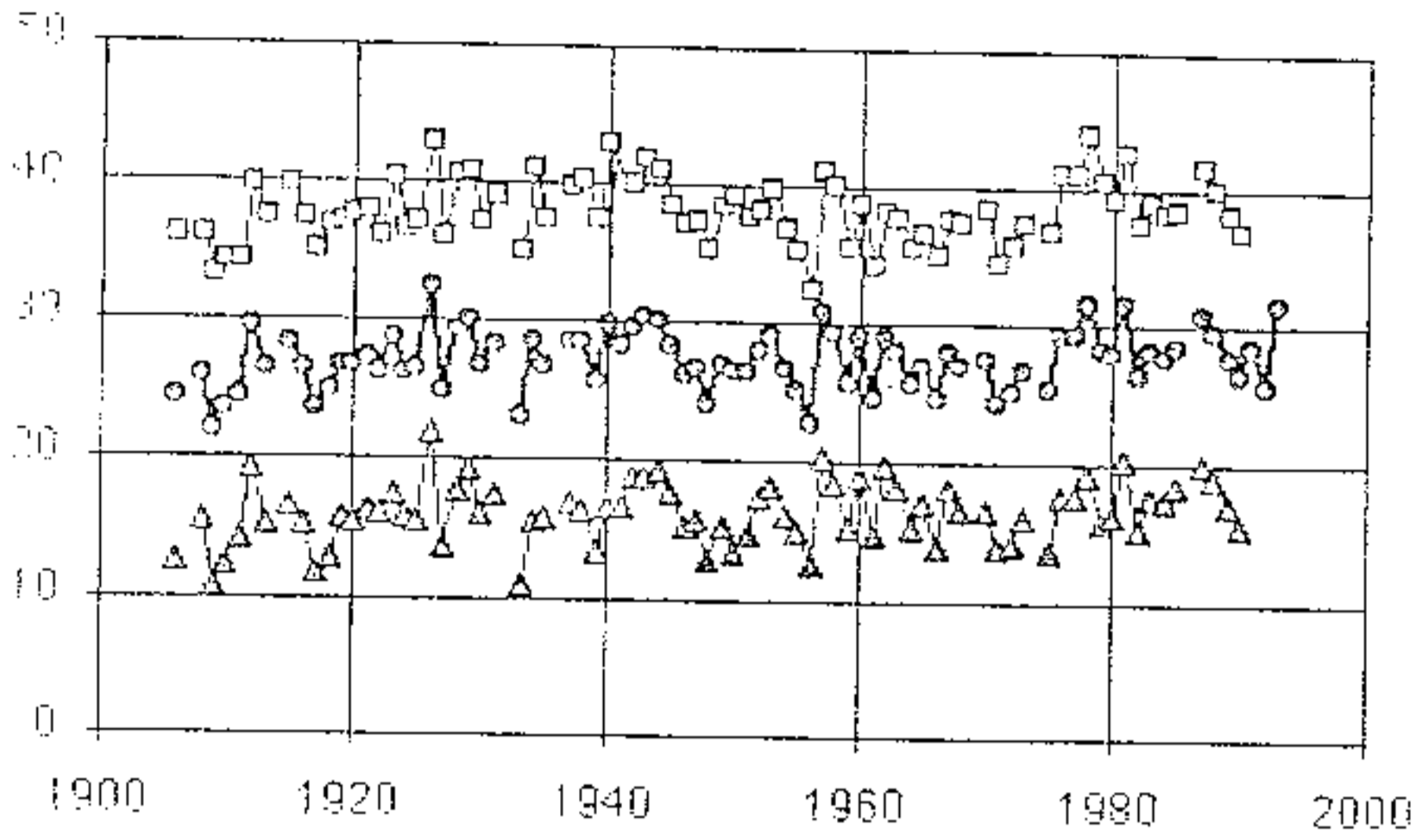
Daily Temperatures

This set graphs shows daily temperatures for Anchorage from April through October, 1996. The vertical bars show the range of temperatures (in degrees Farenheit) for each 24-hour period. The jagged lines at the top show the record high and low temperatures for each date, and the gray swath in the middle shows the normal daily range. Stars are records set in 1996. Similar graphs are available for a number of other Alaskan localities. Monthly data are posted within a few weeks after the month is over.

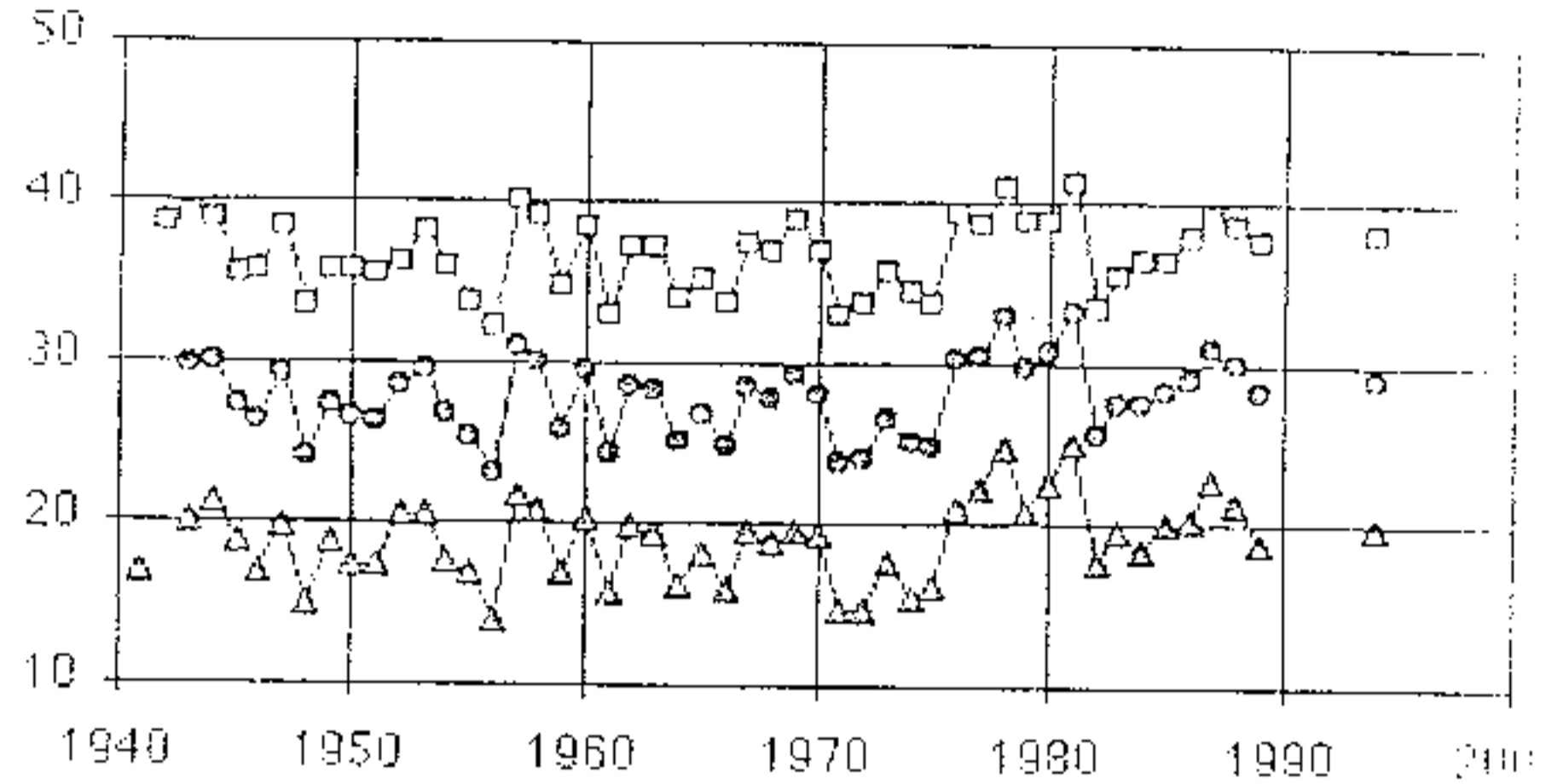


Temperature History for Selected Alaska Locations

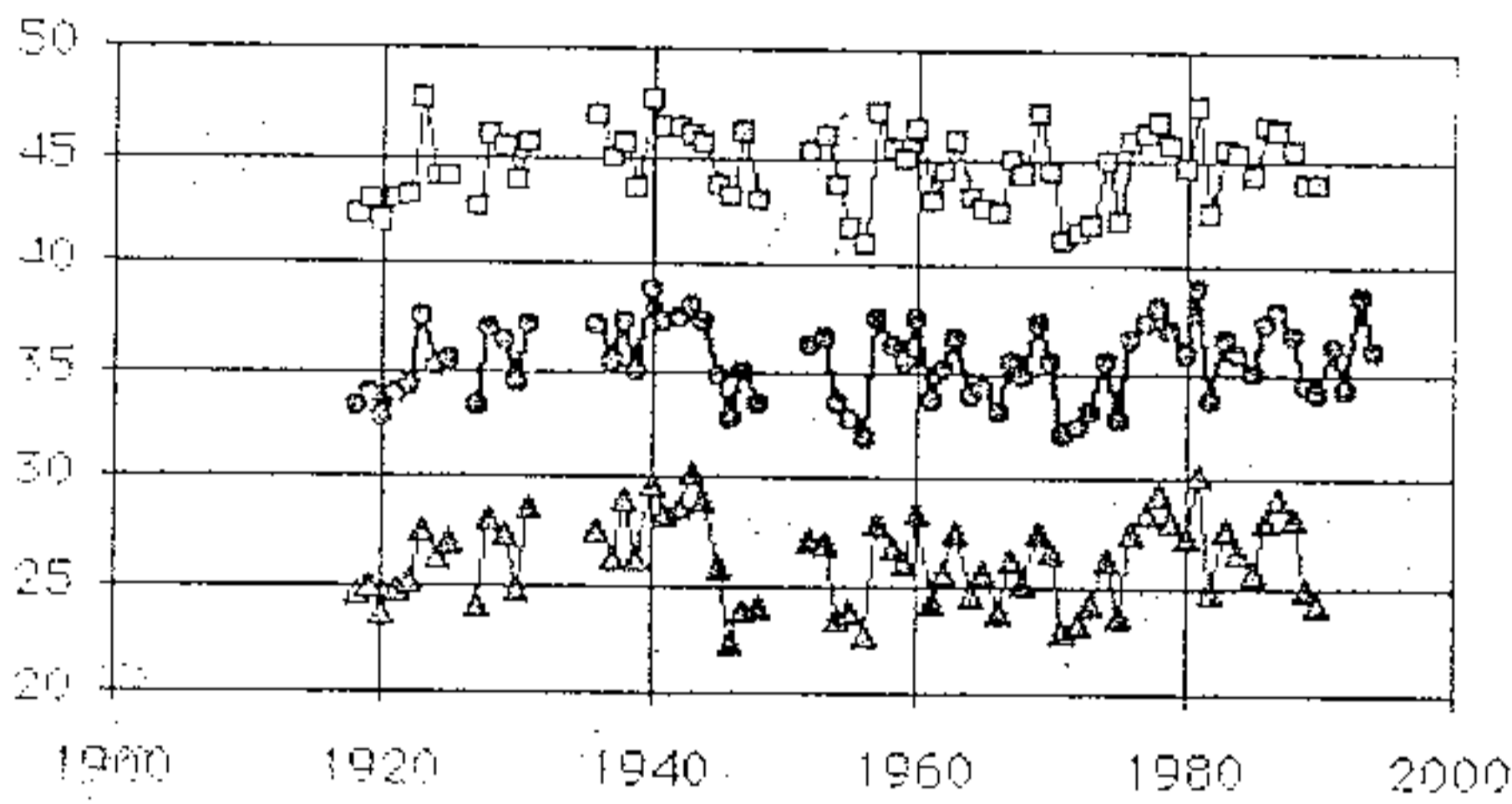
This set of graphs tracks the temperature history for ten locations around the state where apples are grown, dating back as far as 100 years in some cases. Three temperatures (in degrees Farenheit) are given for each year, corresponding to the annual mean maximum, annual mean minimum, and annual mean temperatures. These graphs have some holes for certain years when data was not recorded or has been lost, and also some inconsistencies resulting from relocating weather stations (this information is provided at the website). Nonetheless, they prove just how large the variation in average temperature can be from year to year.



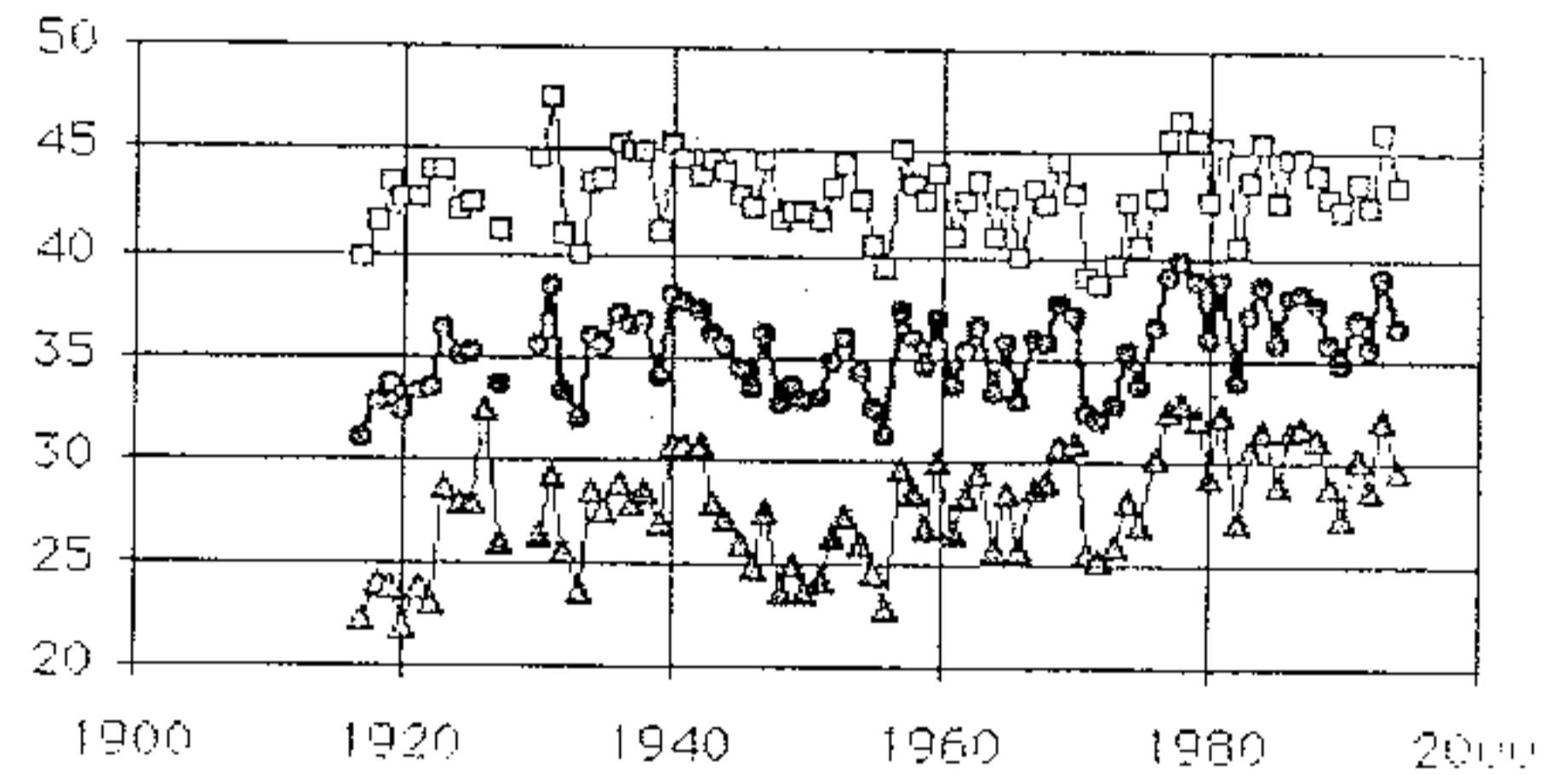
FAIRBANKS (UNIVERSITY)



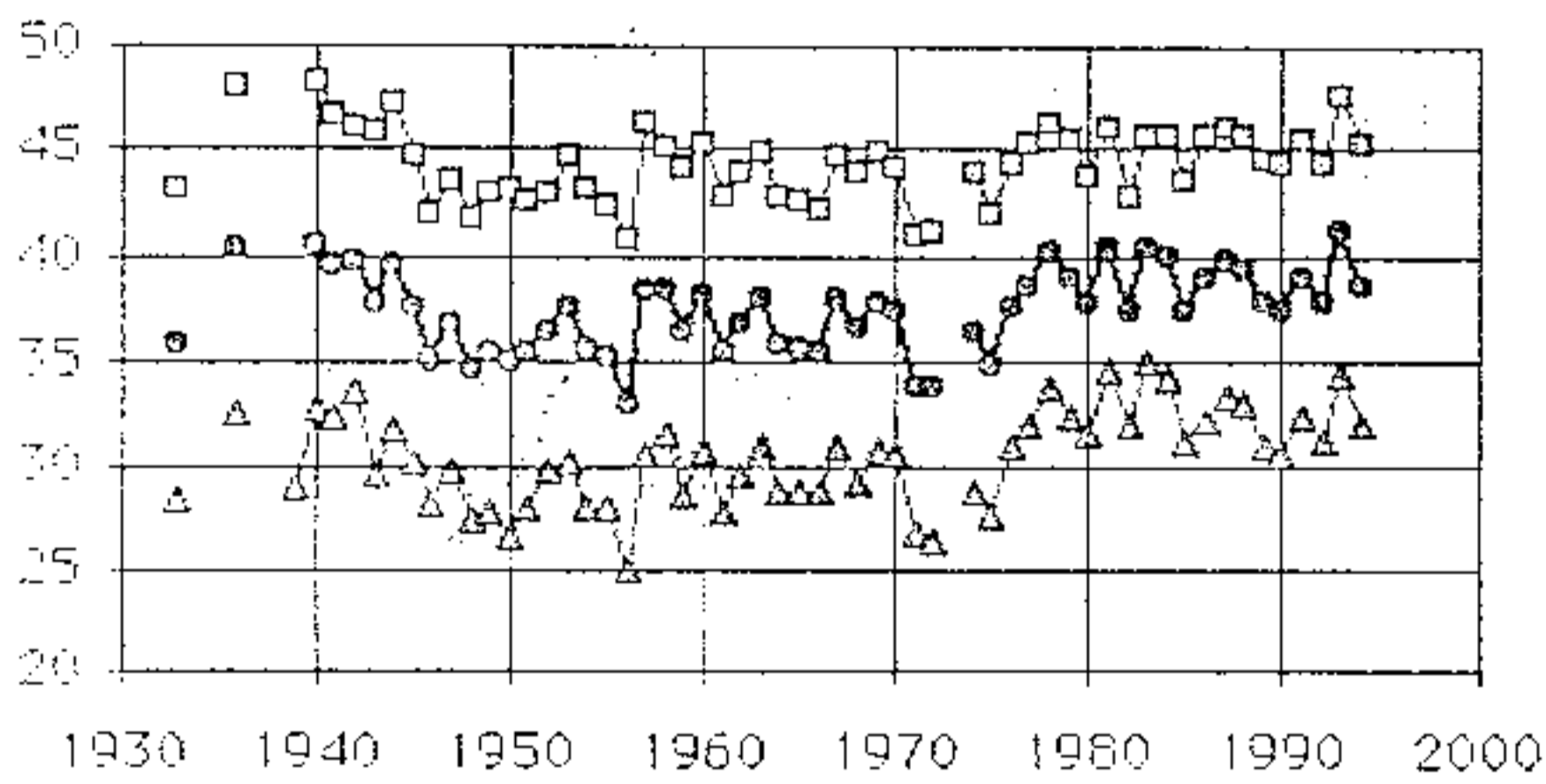
BIG DELTA



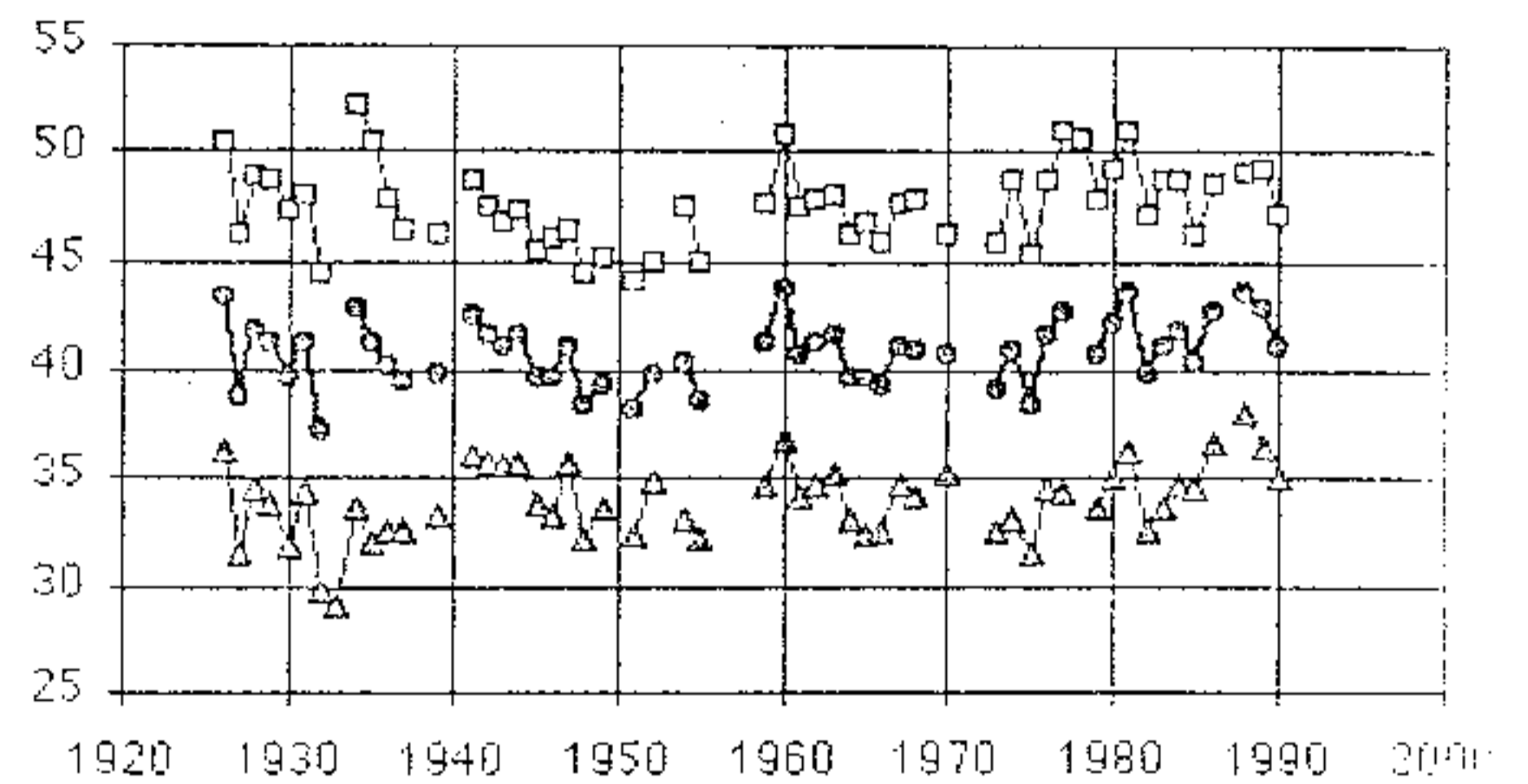
MATANUSKA



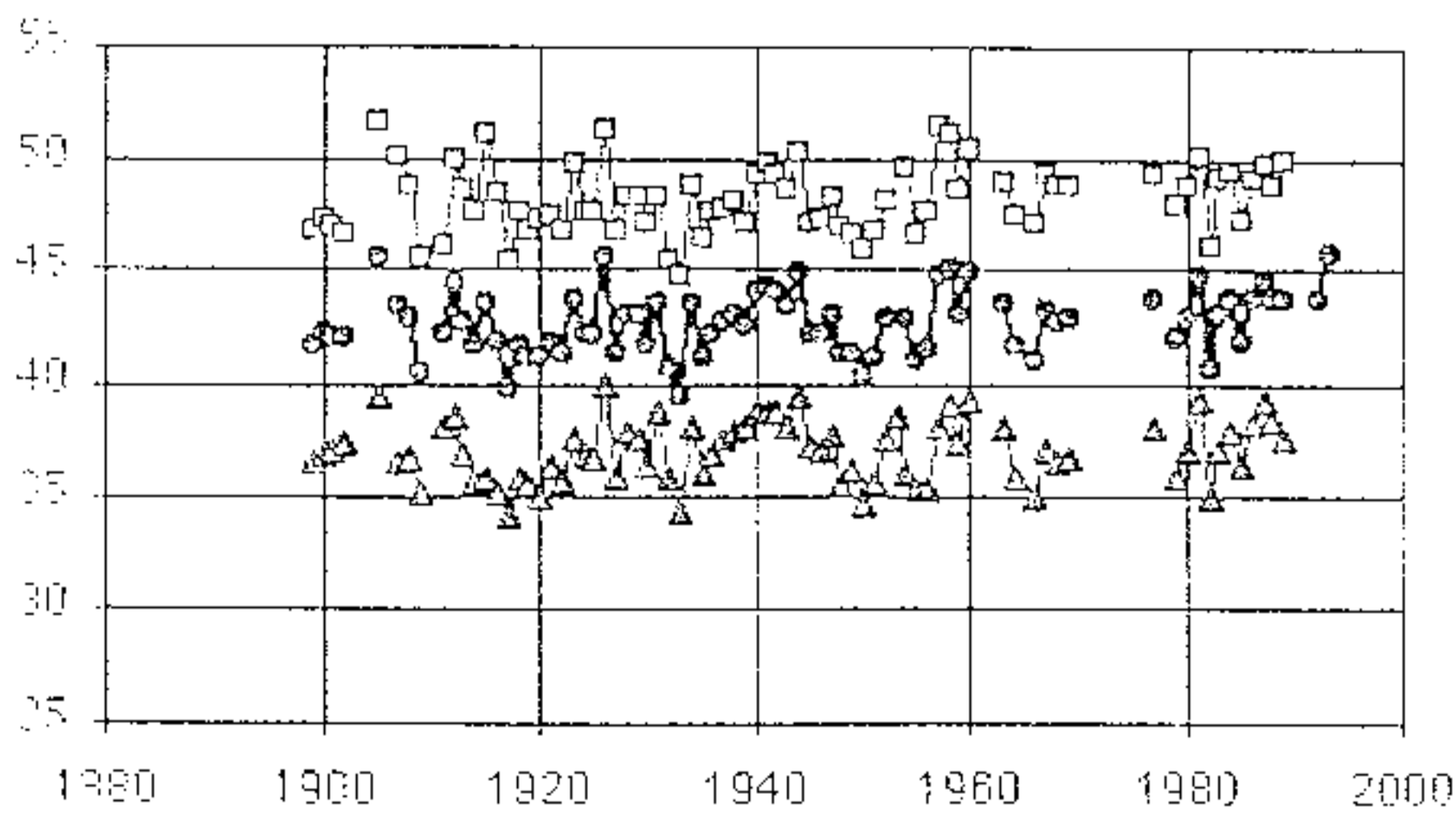
ANCHORAGE



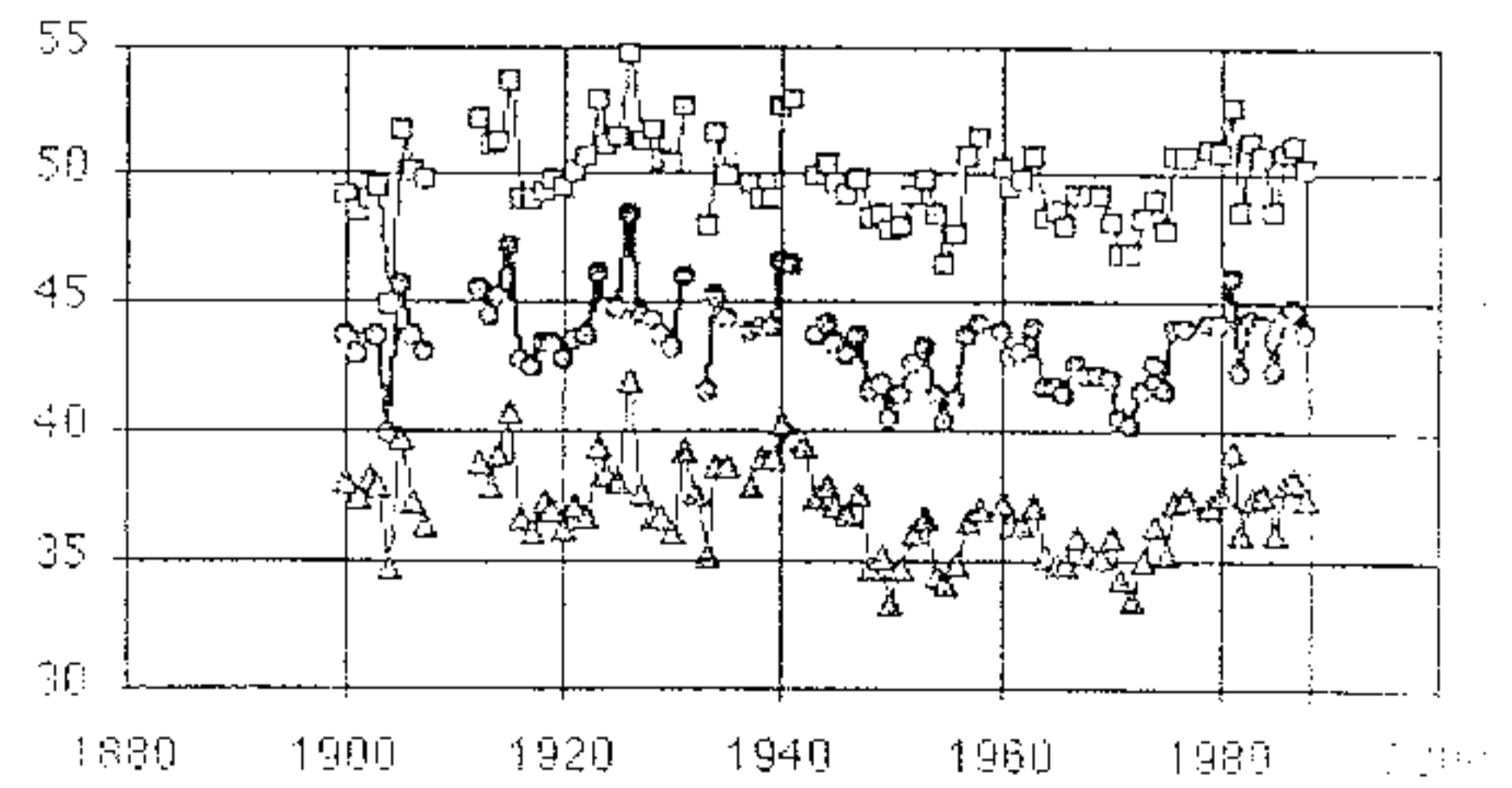
HOMER



HAINES



JUNEAU



SITKA

Bending To Pressure

This Michigan grower's apple orchard is bending over backwards to increase yield.

By Jean D. Aylsworth

LEO Dietrich, an apple grower from Conklin, Mich., has tried bending the leaders on some two-year-old trees to control tree vigor and possibly increase yields as well.

In a planting of Northern Spys on Mark rootstock, he went through the orchard in mid- to late April before blossom and bent the leader over at a 180° angle. The leader was tied to a stake with a tape gun, and a string was run from the leader to a nail driven into the trunk about 4 inches above the ground at a 10° angle.

The trees were left in this position for about one month until the first of June. The leader was then untied and bent back over 180° in the opposite direction and tied down again, reversing the procedure.

"We left it in that position for

another month and on about July 1 we returned the leader to an upright position and fastened it to the bamboo stake with a tape gun," Dietrich says. "When the leader was returned to an upright position, it had several 4- to 6-inch lateral shoots that originated at almost a 90° angle to the leader.

"We also tied all major scaffold branches down to a 90° angle. They were tied to the nail using a two-ply cotton twine."

Dietrich says the process is rather labor-intensive, but results in earlier production and quicker return on investment.

"More fruit spurs are formed and that's a difference you can see even in the dormant season," he says. "Varieties that respond best include Northern Spy, Gala, and Fuji." □

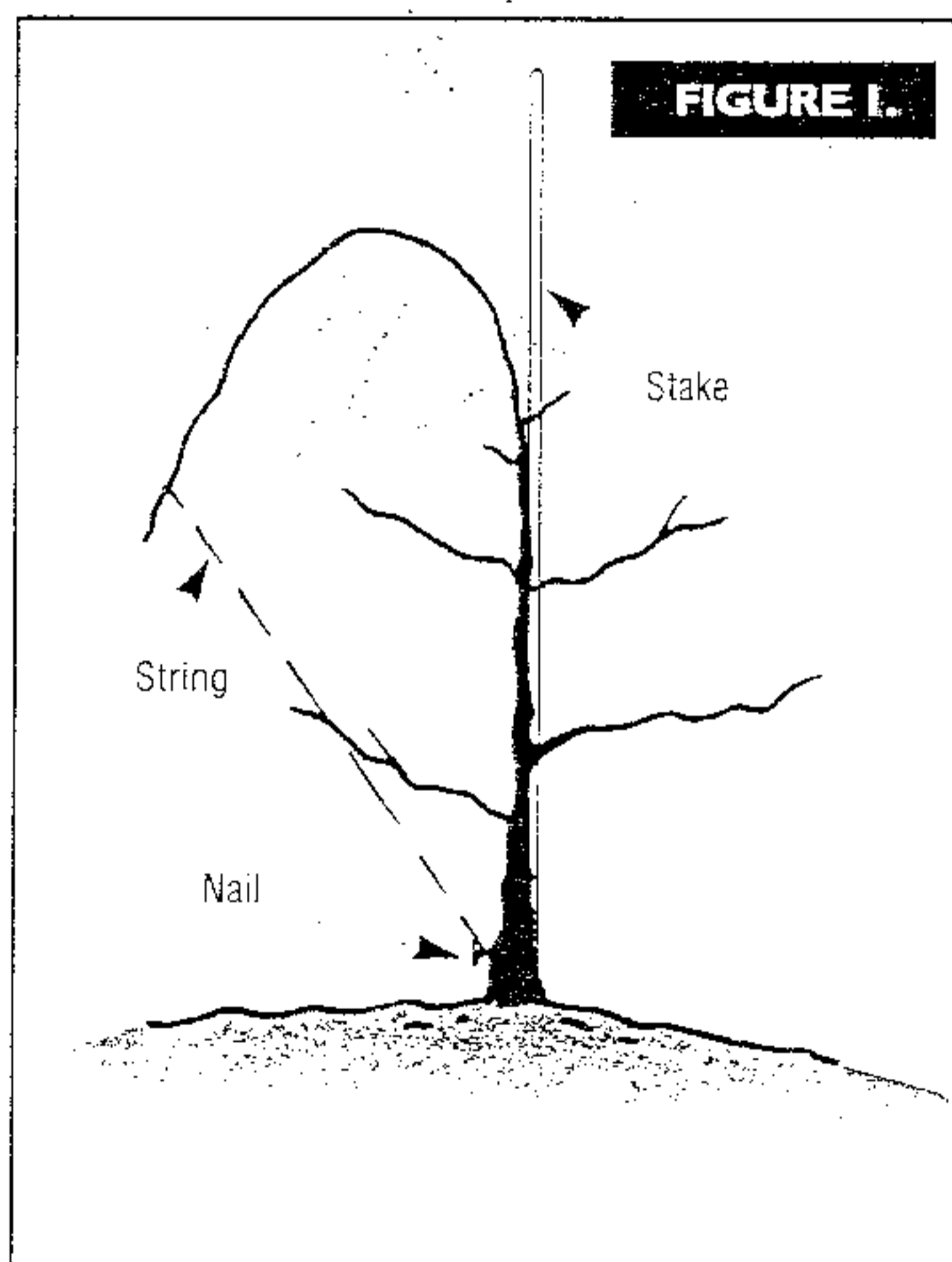


FIGURE 1.

Beginning in mid- to late April, Dietrich ties the leader over at a 180° angle. A string runs from the leader to a nail driven into the base of the trunk.

As illustrated in Figure 2 (top right) around the beginning of June Dietrich rebends the leader in the opposite direction. As with the earlier bend, a string runs from the leader to a nail in the trunk, holding the leader at a 180° angle. Note small branches developing on leader.

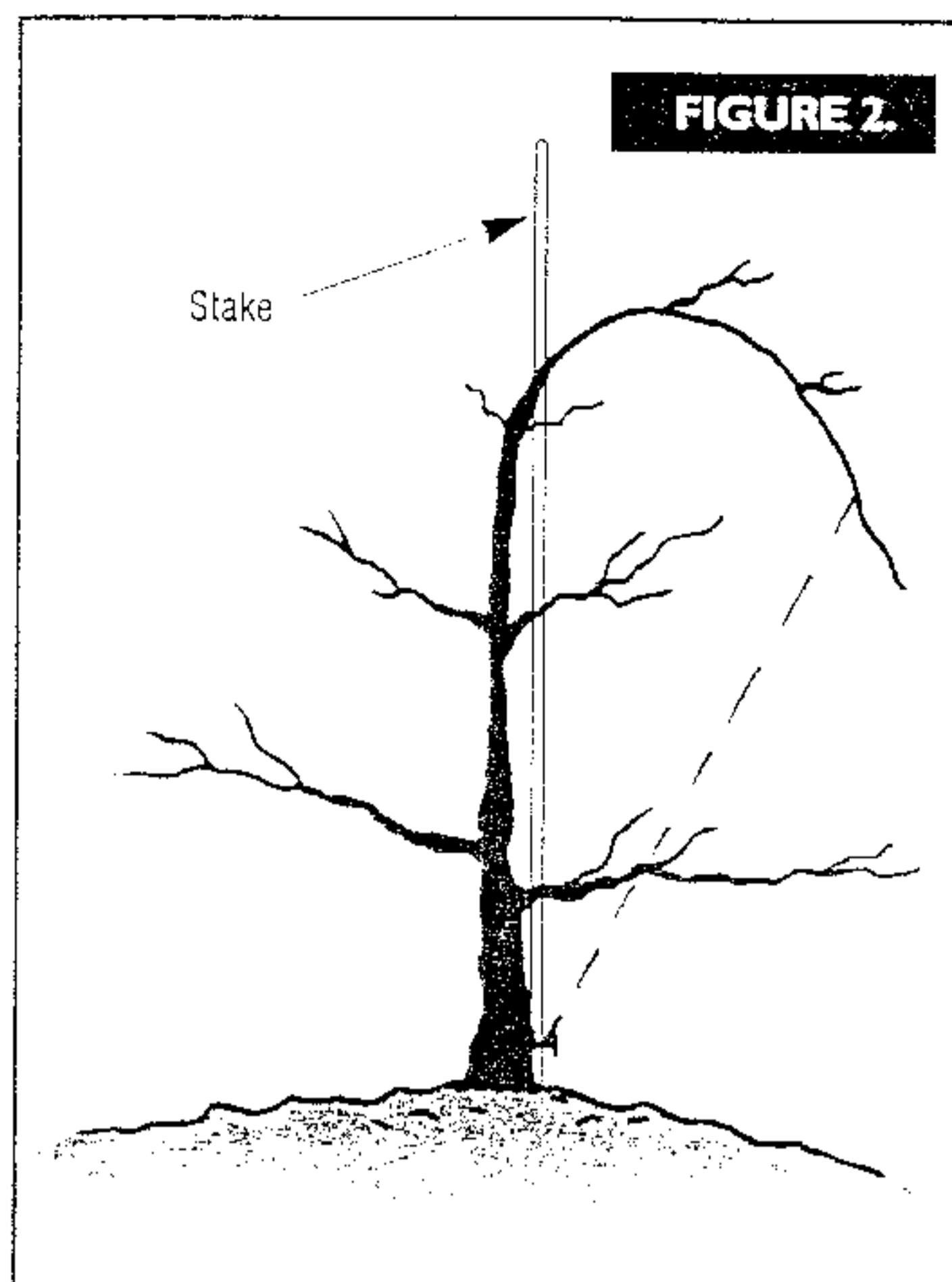


FIGURE 2.

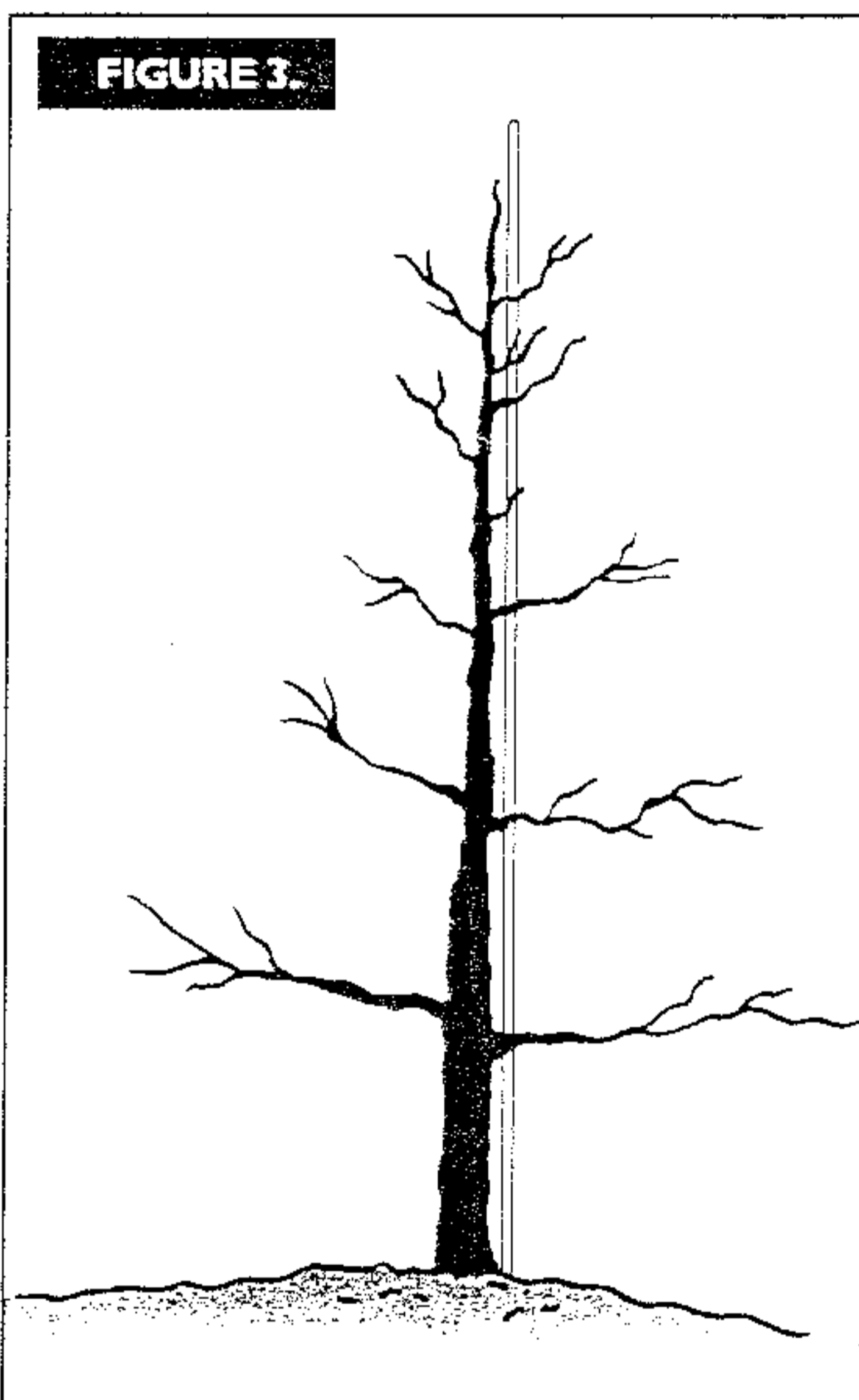


FIGURE 3.

Figure 3 shows the leader after it is returned to its original position in early July. Several 4- to 6-inch lateral shoots, at a 90° angle to the leader, developed due to the leader bending.

American
Vegetable Grower

WESTERN **Fruit Grower**

American
Fruit Grower

37733 Euclid Avenue • Willoughby, OH 44094 • Phone 800-572-7740 / 216-942-2000 • FAX 216-942-0662