

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS' NEWSLETTER

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company on meeting nights! Hope to see you there!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February 20, 1992, 7:00 p.m., at the Dimond Greenhouses, 1050 West Dimond Boulevard (between Arctic Boulevard and Minnesota Drive), Anchorage. Loretta Delk, of the Anchorage Garden Club, will speak on Garden Club activities and the "greening" of Anchorage.* **Patrick Wright** will share the spotlight and speak on growing tomatoes in Anchorage. Please join us there!

March 19, 1992, same time/same place. Program to be announced.

April 16, 1992, same time/same place. Grafting workshop!

Please mark your calendars ahead so we can share your

NOTES FROM THE SOUTH

I am preparing this edition of our newsletter from my parents' home in Lacey (Olympia), Washington—and I want you to know that spring is arriving early in some parts of America! From my folks' kitchen window, I can see my daughter happily playing on the swing set in the backyard (blissfully unaware of what seems like a true miracle to me) amid *green* grass, blooming pussywillows, bursting

buds on many of the trees, and daffodils, crocus, and hyacinths pushing their promise of flowers above the new red bark mulch on the flower beds—even the flowering

*
"He that planteth a tree . . .
provideth a kindness for many
generations."

Henry van Dyke (1852-1933)

cherries are bursting into clouds of pink blossoms. My soul feels refreshed—and I'm ready to return to the snow and cold of Alaska because I have seen spring and I know it's heading north. Take heart!

FRUIT FACTS FROM EDMONTON

By Bob Purvis

On April 9, 1991, I received a phone call from Bernie Nikolai, a new NAFEX member in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He had some interesting information to share about the performance of fruit cultivars appropriate for Alaska, and I am publishing this information because it fills in gaps in our knowledge of some of them.

Edmonton (latitude 53° 34' North) averages a 140-day frost-free season. The record high there is 93°F. The record low, set in the 1890's, is -54°F; but in the past 10-20 years, the low for the winter has typically been in the -28°F to -33°F range. Average temperature for July is 64°F (versus 58°F for Anchorage), with daytime highs typically in the mid-70's. Shallow but persistent snow cover normally blankets the ground from mid-November to late March. Wintertime temperatures are very stable. Rainfall averages 14", with 54" of snow in the wintertime in addition.

Concerning apples, Bernie reported that a friend of his has been growing "Vista Bella" on Malling 9 and Malling 26 (two [2] dwarfing rootstocks) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and

has had no winter injury on the trees after -40°F and drying winds. "Vista Bella" has fruited for four (4) consecutive years for him there. His "Vista Bella" apples won first prize of 79 entries in the provincial fair last year. His "secret" for success involved withholding water from the trees in late summer, and then watering them thoroughly just before the ground began to freeze (early November in Edmonton, probably about the same in Saskatoon).

Of "Norda" apple, he commented that some people preferred its taste over "Norland". A cross of Rescue with Mantet, it combines their qualities of hardiness and flavor and multiplies the keeping ability of them in addition. ("Norda" will keep until February in cold storage.)

Of "September Ruby", he said that it would store for 20 weeks, was developed in Beaverlodge, had the quality and hardiness of "Norland", and was suitable for fresh eating or cooking. "September Ruby" became available in 1990 at the Saanichton Plant Quarantine Station; limited quantities of scionwood may be available from Whitney's Orchard & Nursery in the spring of 1992. Ripening time in Anchorage would be the end of September, it appears.

"PF 51" (the "PF" stands for Prairie Farms) is a Haralson-Rescue cross, very hardy, reported to be of excellent dessert quality. Size is 6-7 centimeters in diameter; the color is light green streaked red on the sunward side. Ripening season is early to mid-September in Edmonton, implying late September in Anchorage. "922 End" is, according to Bernie's letter, "the

absolute best pie apple of any, also very good dessert. It is of small to medium size, yellow with red blush, extremely heavy bearing, and will soon be commercially available." Bernie obtained scionwood of both these from the Alberta Government Tree Nursery. Ripening date is September 15-22 in Edmonton.

"Improved Battleford" is a seedling derived from an open-pollinated "Battleford", giving much heavier yields, better flavor, and more hardiness than the parent. "Enigma" is a delicious sweet variety unknown commercially—sold 15 years ago as a "Battleford", but closest in flavor to a "Carroll"—ripening September 15-22 in Edmonton.

"Valentine" is a huge yellow apple with a red blush, sweet and crisp. It has proven hardy in tests in Saskatchewan and was to be sold commercially by one nursery there in 1991 for the first time. It keeps until St. Valentine's Day, hence the name. Its apples are huge, yet very good for fresh eating. Ripening date is September 15-22 in Edmonton.

"Oberle" is another apple, bred at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and released jointly by VPI and the Kentville (Nova Scotia) Research Station of Agriculture Canada in 1987. The tree is upright to spreading, moderately vigorous, precocious in bearing; the fruit ripens with or before Yellow Transparent. The fruit is medium to large, round, distinctively blotched; the flesh is cream-colored, crisp, tender, juicy, of high quality.

With regard to pears, "Ure" is their best, but he said that "Sauvignac" (available from St. Lawrence Nurseries) was "really tasty".

The wife of a nurseryman friend of his calls the fruit from the M.604 apricot "the best". During the past five (5) years, the nurseryman had one (1) heavy and one (1) light crop off his trees; the other three (3) years, there was no crop there in Edmonton, where bloom date for apricots is late April to early May (versus May 6 as the average date for the last spring frost).

Bernie said that "Harrow Diamond" peach has been fully winter-hardy in shoot and flower bud in Quebec for NAFEX member Ken Taylor, in zone four (4). It is hardier than "Reliance" and excellent in flavor. As such, it might be a worthwhile candidate for a greenhouse in Anchorage, and it is now available from Saanichton.

Bernie rates "Pembina" and "Brookgold" plums as outstanding in flavor. "Pembina" ripens 12 days after "Norland" apples in Edmonton (September 3 versus August 21). "Pembina" and "Brookred" are both late-blooming; "Brookgold", early-blooming, according to what he has heard. Regarding "Dandy", a very hardy prairie plum, he commented that his dad has two (2) trees of it at his home near Winnipeg, Manitoba. The skin is tart and thick; the flesh sweet and orange. It is best for preserves.

(Editor's note: Although this article was written almost a year ago, it has some valuable information to offer.)

ORDERS FOR HARDY ASPARAGUS NOW BEING TAKEN

Doctor Herb James, of James' Bedding Plants, will be seeding hardy asparagus in February for May-June delivery. The price is unchanged, \$11.00/dozen. Orders may be placed with him at home, 1000 East 28th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99508, or at 272-3828 (leave a message if he's not there).

GOOD NEWS FOR HEALTH-CONSCIOUS CAKE-LOVERS

Compiled from the Culinary Cache,
The Anchorage Times
January 1, 1992,
and Mott's National Ad Campaign

If you and your family are cake lovers, but have avoided your favorite cakes because of their high calorie and fat content, here's an idea that will make culinary resolutions for 1992 easier to follow.

The folks who make Mott's Apple Sauce have discovered that by substituting applesauce in place of the oil, shortening, or melted butter called for in cakes, fat is virtually eliminated and calories cut by over 50%.

Moist and tempting devil's food cake, rich with the heavenly taste of dark chocolate; luscious carrot cake bursting with the sweetness of carrots, raisins, and walnuts; even elegant white or yellow cake—all of these can be baked with no fat just by substituting equal amounts of applesauce in place of the oil or

butter. The applesauce provides the needed moisture and texture with none of the fat, none of the cholesterol, and only a small fraction of the calories.

In taste tests conducted by Mott's, virtually no change was noted in appearance, texture, or taste when applesauce was used in place of fat. So go ahead—make your family happy. (Editor's note: I tried this—and it works!)

For a free supply of kitchen-tested recipes from Mott's, call (800) 225-3548.

Since I have been editing our newsletter (beginning September 1991), I have noticed that most of the articles being published have concentrated on tree fruits—apples, pears, and plums, mostly—and I feel we have been neglecting some of the smaller fruits—berries, currants, etc. Therefore, I am now soliciting for articles on these subjects for publication in our newsletter. It needn't be anything grand, but if you have an interest in this area or something of interest to offer, please send me a letter or article. Thanks!

And now for the second installment of Leslie Toombs' article, Apples for Alaska: Don't Forget the Classics, which appeared last month, January 1992. Leslie photocopied pages from *The Apples of New York* for inclusion here. This month's apple classic: the Alexander.

Cells large, abaxile; cells open or partly closed; core lines clasping. *Carpels* elongated, ovate-pointed, mucronate. *Seeds* few, medium to large, rather narrow, long, acute. *Flesh* moderately coarse, very tender, juicy, mild subacid, good.

ALEXANDER.

REFERENCES. 1. Forsyth, 1824:131. 2. London Hort. Soc. Cat., 1831: No. 10. 3. Kenrick, 1832:65. 4. Floy-Lindley, 1833:11. 5. Mag. Hort., 1:395. 1835. 6. Downing, 1845:79. *fig.* 7. Thomas, 1849:146. 8. Cole, 1849:118. 9. Emmons, Nat. Hist. N. Y., 3:32. 1851. 10. Barry, 1851:282. 11. Elliott, 1854:120. 12. Gregg, 1857:41. 13. Hooper, 1857:11. 14. Am. Pom. Soc. Cat., 1862. 15. Warder, 1867:510. 16. Fitz, 1872:152. 17. Leroy, 1873:333. *fig.* 18. Ia. Hort. Soc. Rpt., 1879:538. 19. Downing, 1881:11 index, app. 20. Hogg, 1884:72. 21. Roach, Montreal Hort. Soc. Rpt., 1886-87:27. 22. Wickson, 1889:244. 23. Lyon, Mich. Hort. Soc. Rpt., 1890:288. 24. Bailey, An. Hort., 1892:234. 25. Hoskins, Rural N. Y., 53:278. 1894. 26. Gaucher, 1894: No. 14. col. pl. 27. Dempsey, Ont. Fr. Stat. An. Rpt., 1:24. 1894. 28. Burrill and McCluer, Ill. Sta. Bul., 45:312. 1896. 29. Stinson, Ark. Sta. Bul., 43:102. 1896. 30. Waugh, Vt. Sta. Bul., 61:29. 1897. 31. Can. Hort., 20:283. 1897. 32. Woolberton, Ont. Fr. Stat. An. Rpt., 5:5. 1898. *figs.* 33. Bunyard, Jour. Roy. Hort. Soc., 1898:354. 34. Craig, Cyclo-pedia of Amer. Hort., 3:1404. 1901. 35. Hansen, S. D. Sta. Bul., 76:22. 1902. 36. Munson, Me. Sta. Rpt., 1902:83, 85, 86. 37. Budd-Hansen, 1903:36. *fig.* 38. Powell and Fulton, U. S. B. P. J. Bul., 48:35. 1903. 39. Beach and Clark, N. Y. Sta. Bul., 248:111. 1904. 40. Scriber, Can. Hort., 28:248. 1905.

SYNONYMS. *Albertin* (17, 26). ALEXANDER (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40). *Alexander* (34, 26). *Alexander the First* (31). *Alexandre* (17, 26). *Aphortia* (3, 4, 6, 9, 13, 17, 20, 26, 31). *Aphortia Nalvina* (26). *Aubertin* (17, 26). *Beauty of Queen* (17, 26). *Belle d'Orleans* (17, 26). *Comte Woronzoff* (17, 26). *Corail* (17, 26). *English King* (19, 26). *Empereur Alexandre I* (17, 26). *Empereur Alexandre de Russie* (17, 26). *Empereur de Russie* (17, 26). *EMPEROR ALEXANDER* (3, 4, 20, 33). *Empereur Alexander* (2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 26, 32). *Fin d'Automne* (17, 26). *Grand Alexander* (26). *GRAND-ALEXANDRE* (17). *Grand Alexandre* (26). *Gros-Alexandre* (17, 26). *Jolly Gentleman* (26). *KAISER ALEXANDER* (26). *Korallen Apfel* (26). *Phœnix* (26). *Phœnix* (17, 26). *Pomona Britannica* (17, 26). *Président Napoléon* (17, 26). *Russian Emperor* (2, 6, 9, 13, 20, 26). *Stoke Tulip* (26). *Wolf River* incorrectly (39). *Wunderappel* (26).

Alexander is a typical representative of the class of Russian apples commonly known as the Apport group. Fruit very large, attractive red or striped, coarse in texture, medium to good in quality, suitable for culinary rather than for dessert use. The fruit is apt to crack and decay about the stem and calyx and often becomes discolored where it is chafed by constantly rubbing

against some twig or branch; there is also a considerable loss from premature dropping of the fruit. Notwithstanding these faults many fruit growers now regard Alexander favorably as a commercial variety as in some markets there is a strong demand for the fruit at good prices. It is being used to some extent for export trade (40). Its season begins in September and extends through October or into November. It may be held in cold storage till November. It goes down quickly and as it does not stand heat well before going into storage it should be shipped the day it is picked and under ice (39). As it ripens continuously during a period of from four to six weeks it should have more than one picking. The tree is hardy, vigorous and moderately productive. In some localities it is subject to blight. It can be recommended for planting in commercial orchards to a limited extent. In the West it is now largely supplanted by its Wisconsin seedling Wolf River (34, 36).

Historical. Introduced into England from Russia in 1817 (20). The exact date of the introduction of this variety into America is not known. The Massachusetts Horticultural Society made several importations of European varieties which were distributed among the members of the society. Mr. Manning exhibited what was supposed to be Alexander before the Massachusetts Horticultural Society at its meeting on September 18, 1830. Whether this was Alexander or not, the shipment of varieties of which Alexander was one had evidently been made prior to that date.¹ It has been widely disseminated and is now pretty well known in the apple growing districts from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Thus far it has not been grown to any considerable extent in New York state but at the present time its cultivation is on the increase.

TREE.

Tree large to medium, vigorous to moderately vigorous with long, stout branches. *Form* upright spreading to roundish, open and somewhat inclined to droop after bearing heavy crops. *Twigs* short, curved, stout with large terminal buds; internodes medium. *Bark* brown mingled with olive-green, lightly streaked with scarf-skin; slightly pubescent near tips. *Lenticels* scattering, medium in size, oval, raised. *Buds* medium in size, plump, obtuse, free, slightly pubescent.

FRUIT.

Fruit large, uniform in size and shape. *Form* roundish conic to slightly oblate conic, regular or approaching broadly angular, symmetrical. *Stem* medium to rather short, moderately thick. *Cavity* acute to acuminate, deep, broad, symmetrical, occasionally tipped, russeted, often with broad, con-

¹ N. E. Farmer, Sept. 24, 1830:78.

spicuous, outspreading russet rays. *Calyx* medium to large, usually open; lobes medium to short, rather narrow, acute. *Basin* rather small, deep, narrow to nearly medium in width, abrupt, nearly smooth, symmetrical.

Skin moderately thick, tough, smooth, glossy, somewhat waxy, greenish or pale yellow deepening to orange-yellow in the sun, often entirely over-spread with lively red or handsomely striped and splashed with bright carmine. *Dots* inconspicuous, small, scattering. *Prevailing effect* red or striped.

Calyx tube variable, long to short, wide to medium, conical to funnel-shape. *Stamens* median to basal.

Core small, usually axile; cells often not uniformly developed, closed or very slightly open; core lines slightly clasping. *Carpels* elliptical to slightly ovate, emarginate. *Seeds* medium in size, wide, short, rather plump, obtuse to acute.

Flesh nearly white with faint yellow tinge, firm, coarse, moderately crisp, tender, juicy, mild subacid, fair to good.

Season September and October or early November.

AMSTERDAM.

REFERENCES. 1. Downing, 1876:43 app. 2. Ragan, U. S. B. P. I. Bul., 56:26, 1905.

SYNONYMS. AMSTERDAM (2). AMSTERDAM SWEET (1). *Amsterdam Sweet* (2). *Hightop Sweet* incorrectly (1).

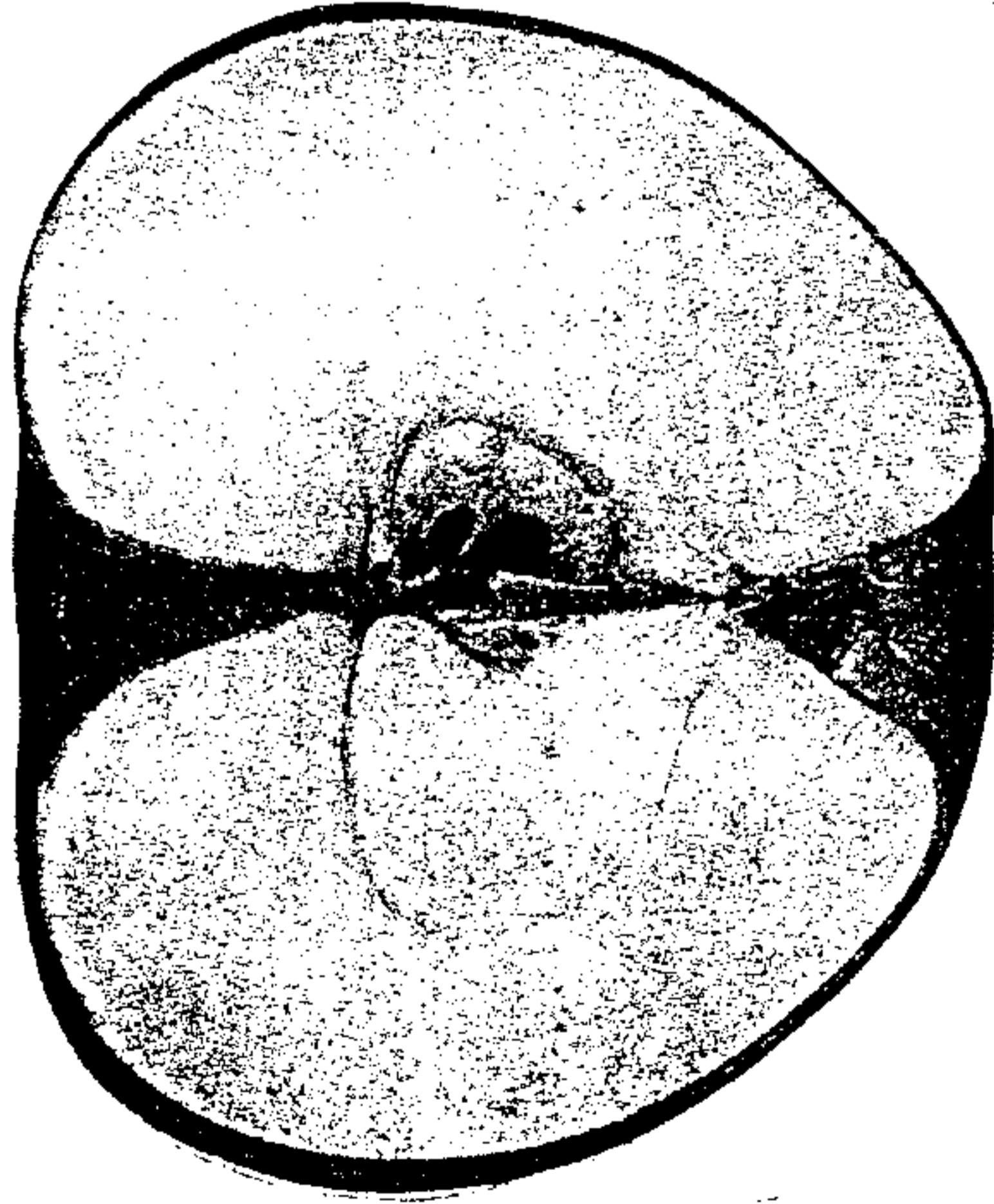
Downing describes this fruit as medium in size, pale greenish-yellow, striped and splashed with light and dark bright red; flesh white, half fine, tender, juicy, rather rich, sweet, slightly aromatic; season October and November. Origin Amsterdam, N. Y., on the farm of Joseph Britten (1). We find no account of Amsterdam except the one above mentioned, and have not seen the variety.

ANISIM.

REFERENCES. 1. Schroeder, *Montreal Hort. Soc. Rpt.*, 1886-87:71. 2. Hoskins, *Rural N. Y.*, 52:299, 1893, figs. 3. Greene, *Minn. Sta. Bul.*, 32:240, 1893. 4. Budd, *Ia. Sta. Bul.*, 31:334, 1895. 5. Thomas, 1897:626. 6. Budd, *Ia. Sta. Bul.*, 41:66, 69, 71, 1899. 7. *Am. Rom. Soc. Cat.*, 1899:15. 8. Munson, *Me. Sta. Rpt.*, 1902:83, 86, 95. 9. Hansen, *S. D. Sta. Bul.*, 76:23, 1902, fig. 10. Budd-Hansen, 1903:38, fig.

SYNONYMS. ANISIM (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). *Anisim* of Peterson (9). *Borsdorfer* of Wragg (9), *3 M* (3, 8, of Budd 9), *14 M* of Budd (9). *Good Peasant* of Patten (9). *Jonathan* of the North (4). *Swedish Borsdorfer* of Patten (9). *Zuzoff* of Tuttle (9).

Hansen (9) reports that this Russian apple is proving very valuable in Minnesota and other parts of the Northwest. It may be of some value in those portions of New York state where superior hardiness is a prime requisite. Hansen's description is given below. "Tree a strong grower in the nursery and orchard and a prodigious bearer; young trees upright, spreading with age; limbs long, slender with a very strong shoulder; leaves



ALEXANDER (Reduced Size)