**Troy’s Orchard 1908**

**Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney, NSW: 1870 - 1919), Wednesday 8 July 1908, page 34**

THE FRUITGROWER.

IN CUMBERLAND.

No. XXVII.

BY UNICORN.

AN HISTORIC ORCHARD.

The Troy family, of Marsfield, are well known in the fruit-growing industry, more especially in this portion of Central Cumberland, and not only have the present generation been engaged in fruit-growing from childhood, but, as Mr. Thomas Troy, owner of the abovenamed holding, puts it, "my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, before me, obtained their living from the soil. The late Mr. Thomas Wright, great-grandfather of the owner of Mayfield Orchard, came out to this colony as gardener to Governor Phillip, and after serving for a short time in that capacity was given a grant of 40 acres of land on the Hawkesbury River. Governor Phillip also made him a present from his garden of some orange, apple, pear and plum trees, and these were the first fruit trees ever grown on the Hawkesbury. It was from their stock, mostly, that the trees of this now important fruit-growing centre have sprung. One of his daughters married, first, Robert Allen, and after his death, James Maher, whose daughter, Mary, became the wife of the late Mr. George Troy, father of the owner of Mayfield orchard. The late Mr. George Troy was a wheelwright by trade, but he gave that up and started fruit-growing in Marsfield about 60 years ago, the orchard, which is still being worked by the son, containing an area of 10 acres. Upon it were raised some of the best Royal George peaches ever grown in Cumberland. Between 25 and 30 years ago two special trees of this variety yielded in the season between them 25 gin cases of fruit, equal to about 55 present-day boxes, and it was no uncommon thing in those days for the 70 peach trees then growing in the orchard to yield on an average from six to eight gin cases per tree in the year, the smallest peach then being equal to the best now grown. It is a remarkable fact that upon the old orchard there is a cherry plum tree 60 years old, which is still bearing. But to return to Mayfield Orchard, the subject of this article. It occupies an isolated position, and is well sheltered on all sides. The soil is a light loam with a reddish clay subsoil.

CITRUS TREES. The chief of the citrus varieties grown are the Emperor mandarins, and the 200 trees, which are six years old, look remarkably well, the soil and the situation suiting them admirably The patch yielded 400 gin cases last year, and though last year's yield was generally the heaviest crop of mandarins known for the past 21 years, those from Mayfield Orchard realised top prices in the market, viz., 4s and 5s a gin case, sold in July. When only three years old these trees "pulled" 100 cases, the fruit realising then as much as 10s a gin case, which satisfactory price was also obtained the year before last. Mr. Troy regards the Emperor mandarin as the best paying of the citrus tribe. The Thorny mandarin, in his experience, is not so prolific a bearer. He strongly favours the Washington Navel, for which he has realised as much as 10s and 14s a gin case. For one thing, this variety ripens early and can thus be introduced into the market when other kinds are scarce. "The Emperor mandarin, Washington Navel, Early White Siletta, and Late Valencia," said he, "are, in my opinion, four of the best varieties of citrus fruits to grow in this district. The Late Valencia is a great hanger and a splendid packing orange. It pays well, too, realising for me as much as 16s and 18s a case late in the season.

SUMMER FRUITS. Most of the best-known varieties of peaches are grown on Mayfield Orchard. "My experience," said Mr. Troy, "is that the Red Ruby, is breed of the Shanghai, is one of the best paying varieties a man could grow here. It is very attractive in appearance, of excellent flavour when well cultivated, and ripens at Christmas time, when there is a grand demand for fruit. Hale's Early comes in about the same time, but this variety does not bear so well as the former. It brings a good price, however — from 10s to 12s a case as a rule, and last year I got for this variety as much as 14s and 16s a half-case, which paid me handsomely. Briggs' Red May resembles the Hale's variety in many respects, but comes in about a fortnight or three weeks earlier, and I have found it a very profitable peach to grow." Other varieties grown by Mr. Troy are Devlin's Red, a variety of Early Newington, ripening about Christmas, and a favourite with packers; the Early River, a heavy bearer and splendid eating peach, but requiring very careful handling, being so easily bruised; the Braddock (a slipstone), J. King Edward, Admiral, Dewey, Shanghai Seedling, Robert Stuart, Metcalfe's Seedling, Small's Seedling (a highly-coloured clingstone), Early Newington, Breazley's Seedling, and Frank's Seedlings. "The Admiral Dewey," Mr. Troy explained, "is not generally known among growers, being a new variety, introduced to this district about two years ago. It is a yellow-fleshed peach, 'with a red cheek,' and thrives and bears well. It Is not only a good eating peach, but is a good packer.''

NECTARINES AND PLUMS.

Mr. Troy has several varieties of nectarines. The Early River, which ripens about Christmas time, he has found a heavy cropper, and as the fruit is large and of excellent flavour, it is usually in good demand. He has got as much as 17s a half-case for this variety. The Meeks' Early nectarine has also proved a heavy cropper with him, and he has done well out of it, as well as the Eldridge Red, which also thrives and crops well on Mayfield Orchard. "The Early Blood," said Mr. Troy, "has proved a very heavy cropper with me, and being of good flavour, it is generally much sought after in the markets. The Satsuma, also a blood plum, has also proved a good cropper, ripening very late in the season, it is also a good packer, and I have obtained for this variety from 4s to 6s per half-case. Some of the trees have averaged in the season as much as 14 half-cases each, the average price obtained being 5s a half-case. The Diamond plum," continued Mr. Troy, "is, in my opinion, one of the most profitable plums grown. It is a fairly heavy cropper, and is large and attractive in appearance, commanding, as a rule, a ready sale. The Wixon I have found a splendid cropper. The Kelsey closely resembles the Wixon; but, in my experience, does not bear so well, though the flavour is better. It has a tendency, however, to burn in the sun. I consider the Angelina Burdett the best early plum grown, from a profit-making point of view. It is a strong bearer in high situations. I have several other varieties— the Black Bully, Cherry Plum, Lutherborough, Tibbett's Seedling, and others, all of which have yielded fairly good returns, though not to be compared with the varieties specially mentioned."

LOQUATS AND DATE PLUMS.

Two varieties of loquats are grown at Mayfield— the Japanese Mammoth and Heard's Seedling; but as the trees, about 100 in all, have only just come into bearing, an opportunity has not yet been afforded of proving their profitableness or otherwise. The indications so far, however, are encouraging. The date plum, or persimmon, is. represented by two varieties —the Bun and the Jubilee. The latter, in Mr. Troy's opinion is preferable from a grower's point of view. The Jubilee is a better flavoured fruit than the first named variety, and though both have proved profitable, the returns from -the Jubilee have exceeded those obtained from the other.

CULTIVATION OF GRAPES.

Three and a half acres are devoted to grapes, which have been bearing for the past 20 years. The black Hamburgh variety occupies a space of 2 acres, the remainder of the patch being taken up with muscats — white Alexandrias and the black muscat. The plot was originally trenched to a depth of 2ft, "and," said Mr. Troy, "it was one of the best cropping vineyards in the district until phylloxera made its appearance 12 months ago. I have cut in a season from 1100 to 1500 boxes of grapes from the vineyard, and have generally obtained the best prices ruling in the markets. I have obtained as much as 10s a case for my black Hamburghs late in the season, when the early crops had realised only from 2s to 2s 6d a case. Mr. Troy considers the black muscat the best paying grape, although it is subject to black spot. As showing the effect of phylloxera in this vineyard, Mr. Troy mentioned that the season before last the disease showed itself on four vines, and notwithstanding the fact that these vines were dug out and burned, stakes and all, last season, an acre and a half of his vines have succumbed to the dreaded disease. Last year he obtained only about 600 boxes of grapes as against 1100 and 1500 boxes in previous years, and this next season he considers he will be lucky if he has anything worth taking to market at all. He is not one of those who believe that in the phylloxera resisting stocks a solution of this trouble has been found. "I have heard good and bad reports from those who have tried it," he said, "but chiefly bad, and so far as I'm concerned I think I'll give grape-growing best."

PESTS AND DISEASES.

"The Indian wax scale and the red scale I have found the most troublesome enemies to deal with among the citrus trees," said Mr. Troy, "but we have managed to keep these well in check by spraying the trees twice a year with a solution of soft soap, tobacco water and soda. The fruit fly has given very little trouble, a fortunate circumstance, which I attribute to the isolate! position of the orchard, and the fact that it is surrounded by bush. Last year I marketed 1000 boxes of summer fruits, and the fiy was responsible for a shortage of not more than 10 boxes, having shown itself in evidence in some of the later varieties. I tried the kerosene remedy, placing under each tree a small tin with kerosene and water, and succeeded in catching a few flies that way. I daresay I should have caught more if they had been numerous, but evidently only a few found their way to my orchard. The best way, in my opinion, to deal with the fly is to pick up the fruit found to be infected and place it in kerosene and water preparatory to boiling or burning it. I consider the San Jose scale is one of the worst diseases fruitgrowers have to contend with. It attacks almost every kind of tree, adhering to the bark and eating right into the sap. The trees attacked by it would speedily die if not attended to. A remedy I have found most efficacious is to paint the barrels of the trees once a year — in August — with a mixture of soft soap, tobacco water, soda, and lime. 1 have also obtained good results by spraying with a lighter solution of these mixtures." The tobacco water above referred to is made by boiling waste tobacco stalks, obtained from the tobacco factories.