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Fig. 1.—Lakeland is a tall-growing variety, and there are usually from five to seven flowers to the cluster, with nearly all clusters producing good quality fruit.

THE LAKELAND TOMATO
A Variety that has proved successful for Winter Production

By D. A. JOHNSTON, B.Sc. (Agric.), M.D.A. (Hons.), Agricultural Adviser

YEAR-ROUND tomato production in Western Australia is dependent upon adequate water supplies and freedom from frosts. The metropolitan area and the lower South-West are the summer-producing areas, but winter production is practically confined to the Geraldton district. Many market gardeners in the metropolitan area have frost-free positions however, and there is an opening for varieties which are adapted to winter conditions.

In recent years, there has been an increasing demand for good quality tomatoes during the winter season. Production at Geraldton has largely satisfied this demand, but metropolitan growers have also been keen to share in this expanding market. However, local varieties have proved unprofitable when grown during the winter period, and so the demand for a suitable winter variety has steadily increased. This demand may be, to some extent, overcome by the recently-introduced variety, Lakeland.

ORIGIN OF LAKELAND

The Lakeland variety was imported from California, U.S.A., in 1952 for trial purposes, the variety having already shown itself capable of producing good quality fruit under cool conditions with low light intensities (Advance in Agronomy, Vol. II, 1950, New York, U.S.A.) The variety, therefore, appeared to be worthy of trial, and arrangements were made to carry out a detailed experiment in the 1953 winter season.
In order to test the new introduction, it was necessary to compare it with a local variety which had been grown over the winter period with some success. For this purpose, a selection of the Wanneroo Late variety was used. A high position was selected on an orange-yellow tuart sand with an easterly aspect. The site was thus protected from the main force of the rain-bearing winds. The selection of a suitable site is most important when growing winter tomatoes. Not only should it be situated as already stated; but it must also be frost-free.

RESULTS OF TRIALS

Apart from its value for commercial cropping, Lakeland should prove a useful variety for the home gardener who prefers an indeterminate variety. In trials conducted by the Vegetable Branch, Lakeland produced 25 per cent. more fruit by weight than the Wanneroo Late. It was also found that Lakeland produced a far greater quantity of first-grade fruit than Wanneroo Late. In the trials, 82 per cent. of the Lakeland fruit was first grade, as against 58 per cent. of the Wanneroo Late.

The Wanneroo Late variety produced a heavy proportion of second-grade and unsaleable third-grade fruit, as is shown by the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Total Yield</th>
<th>Yield First Grade Fruit</th>
<th>Yield Second Grade Fruit</th>
<th>Yield Third Grade Fruit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lakeland ...</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.88</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanneroo Late</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
<td>per acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.99</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another consideration of importance to the commercial producer and the home gardener, is that the fruit of Lakeland is generally more attractive in appearance than that of the Wanneroo Late.

DESCRIPTION

Lakeland is regarded as a variety suitable for autumn, winter and early spring cropping. It is of earlier maturity than the Wanneroo Late, with larger and more uniform fruit. Unlike the Wanneroo Late variety, Lakeland is almost entirely free from radial cracking. The smooth, deep, globe-shaped fruit carry well and have an excellent flavour.

Like most varieties, Lakeland is susceptible to the early blight fungus (Alternaria sp.) and control measures are necessary. The variety is fairly resistant to fusarium wilt, but is susceptible to the eelworm and Sclerotinia diseases. Lakeland is tall-growing, of indeterminate growth habit, thus making staking and pruning desirable. There are from five to
seven flowers per cluster, nearly all clusters producing good quality fruit. There is thus no need to discard the plants after the first few clusters have been harvested.

COMMERCIAL PERFORMANCE

Since its introduction in 1953, Lakeland has been grown in one detailed variety trial and in numerous observational trials throughout the metropolitan area. Detailed trials are to be conducted at Geraldton to determine its suitability for this district, and tests are also being carried out at Harvey, on areas where fruit cracking is prevalent, probably due to moisture fluctuations. During the 1954 winter months, a successful commercial crop of approximately two acres was grown by Mr. J. Leach who had made his property available for the initial trials. From 8,000 plants, this crop produced 3,422 half bushel cases of first-quality fruit or approximately 10½ pounds per plant. The total estimate of yield was between 5,500-6,000 cases, the disease Sclerotinia accounting for approximately 2,000-2,500 cases. It will be seen that this winter crop of Lakeland tomatoes was quite profitable, yielding more than the average summer crop of Wanneroo Late.

CONCLUSION

From results to date, Lakeland has numerous advantages as a winter tomato. Its high yield of good quality fruit, outweighs the defect that the fruit may be slightly large for commercial purposes. Where suitable sites are available, Lakeland may become a valuable crop for the winter months, as well as being useful to the home gardener who wishes to produce good quality tomatoes during June, July and August.
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