Sensational apple yields - Is this an Australian record?

J. S. Bloomfield
SENSATIONAL APPLE YIELDS

Is this an Australian Record?

BY

J. S. BLOOMFIELD,
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MESSRS. A. J. PREECE & SONS of Keysbrook, are the proud owners of an apple orchard which has maintained some amazing production figures for many years. This year's yield of 5,609 packed cases from 347 trees is still 264 cases less than the record yield in 1953, when the trees were 17 years old.

The orchard was planted 21 years ago with trees from New South Wales. Fifty of the trees are of the Yates variety and the balance are Granny Smiths. They were planted 23ft. apart on what was formerly a peat swamp and has drains in each land.

The orchard is not irrigated but the soil remains damp all the year round and the tall lightly-pruned trees provide shade for most of the ground surface. The many heavily-burdened leaders require about 20 props per tree to support them, so that prior to picking, each row appears as a forest of props.

Throughout this article, the term “cases” refers to packed one-bushel dump cases of marketable fruit of “Fancy” or “Good” grades. There is no doubt as to the

authenticity of the figures which are vouched for by officers of the Horticultural Division of the Department of Agriculture who visit the orchard frequently.

OUTSTANDING YIELDS

Since 1951, the 347 trees have yielded a grand total of 33,368 cases, the annual yields being as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>5,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>4,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>5,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>4,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>3,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>3,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>5,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33,368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1.—This tree yielded over 30 packed cases of Granny Smiths annually for five successive years. Its best yield was 37.34 cases in 1953
The 50 Yates trees yielded an average of 1,000 cases a year or 20 cases per tree for the four seasons, 1953 to 1956, inclusive. In the current season, the Yates failed to reach that figure, but the yield from the Granny Smiths would be similar to that of the record season (1953) when the average for the whole orchard was just under 17 cases per tree.

The highest yielding tree in the orchard—a Granny Smith on the end of a row—gave over 30 cases a year in five successive years, 1953 to 1957, including yields of 37.34 cases in 1953 and 36 cases in 1957.

**THE CURRENT SEASON**

This year, picking was commenced on March 10, to relieve over-laden branches. Most of the fruit was 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) in. with 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. and 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. in about equal proportions.

When the main picking commenced on March 24, the sizes were 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. to 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. with a few 3 in. fruits.

A month later, when completing the picking, more than half the fruit was in the 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. to 3 in. range—an excellent illustration of the development of the fruit and the advantages of picking to size.
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