New varieties could extend the peach canning season

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NEW VARIETIES COULD EXTEND THE PEACH CANNING SEASON

The peach canning industry in Western Australia at present has only a limited period of operation, coinciding with the harvest time of the major variety, Golden Queen.

Expansion of the industry by increasing the production of Golden Queen would place a further strain on the processing facilities or involve expansion of these facilities. If the equipment could be used during part of the present idle period, by producing varieties maturing at different times from Golden Queen, the industry might be expanded more economically.

Varieties maturing earlier than Golden Queen are desirable, so that the canning season can begin earlier, preferably in mid-January. As Golden Queen is fairly late-maturing, varieties later than this might not have time to develop full colour in some seasons, so would not be desirable.

The choice of a new canning peach variety involves several considerations apart from harvesting date.

The major requirements of a canning peach are—

- uniform quality and appearance when processed;
- freedom from red-pigmented pit cavities;
- freedom from split stone;
- ability to be processed under the same conditions as other varieties which may be delivered to the factory at the same time.

The last point is especially important if the harvest periods of two varieties overlap.

Ten new varieties have been evaluated at the Stoneville Research Station over the past few years. Their harvest periods for the 1969-70 season are shown in the Table.

*Adviser, Horticulture Division
Some of the varieties tested. Left to right: Goosen, Code 30, Keimoes, Code 38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Harvest period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goosen</td>
<td>15 January - 2 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 30</td>
<td>27 January - 9 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keimoes</td>
<td>9 February - 23 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 38</td>
<td>17 February - 26 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakamas</td>
<td>23 February - 17 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Queen</td>
<td>26 February - 13 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maluti</td>
<td>3 March - 17 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 45</td>
<td>3 March - 23 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatura Aurora</td>
<td>9 March - 23 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokane</td>
<td>13 March - 26 March</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we disregard the varieties maturing later than Golden Queen, the list is reduced to five varieties: Goosen, Code 30, Keimoes, Code 38, and Kakamas. As Kakamas has the same harvest period as Golden Queen, it would need to have the same canning properties to be useful.

Promising varieties

The “code” series of varieties are of Victorian origin and have been back-crossed to a dessert variety which gives them size and dual purpose tendencies. Unfortunately, it also causes them to mature rapidly and subsequently collapse. Because of this, Code 30 and Code 38 would be difficult to handle in large amounts, particularly if harvesting coincided with a heat wave, when much of the crop would be shed.

Goosen, Keimoes and Kakamas are of South African origin and have been bred for processed uniformity and fruit quality.

Goosen

The fruit of Goosen is of good quality for canning and has excellent appearance, texture and flavour, but is extremely prone to split stone, which makes processing difficult. Trees at Stoneville have produced 34 to 60 per cent of fruit affected by split stone and the variety must therefore be discarded.

Code 30

Code 30 fruit is also of good quality but because it is subject to rapid maturation, this variety should only be planted in limited quantities. If growers are fully aware of its limitations, it could provide useful early fruit to begin the canning season in late January.

Keimoes

Provided the trees are properly looked after, the Keimoes variety will produce fruit readily suited to processing. The fruit is uniform when processed, has excellent flesh colour, texture and flavour, and a good storage life. Split stones are negligible.

Renewal shoots may be somewhat willowy compared with Golden Queen, but this can be controlled by using the nematode resistant rootstock Fort Valley and keeping the trees well pruned and fertilised.

The harvest period starts almost three weeks before Golden Queen, and finishes as Golden Queen begins. It is a fully suitable variety to extend the peach canning season.

Code 38

Code 38 suffers from the same maturity problems as Code 30, and also has the disadvantage of a harvest period overlapping Keimoes, which is a better variety. Since the harvest period of Keimoes ends as Golden Queen begins, there is no need for a variety with a harvest period between the two.

Kakamas

Like Keimoes, Kakamas bears a fruit of excellent quality with a low percentage of split stone, which makes processing difficult. Trees at Stoneville have produced 34 to 60 per cent of fruit affected by split stone and the variety must therefore be discarded.
stone. Its major drawback is that it has almost the same harvest period as Golden Queen. Since a greater concentration around the present canning season would place stress on the canning facilities, Kakamas would only be planted in small amounts and only in early districts.

**Late-maturing varieties**

The four varieties maturing later than Golden Queen are not recommended. Maluti and Code 45, in particular, have major disadvantages apart from their harvesting dates. The skin of Maluti is very difficult to remove and requires a much stronger caustic solution than that used for Golden Queen. Code 45 is prone to red-pigmented pit cavities—a disorder which is not present in any of our established varieties and which manufacturers are anxious to avoid.

**BOOK REVIEW**

**A new field guide to Australian birds**

Everyone with the slightest interest in birds will welcome the publication of Peter Slater’s “A Field Guide to Australian Birds—Non Passerines”.

In the words of the author, the “illustrations are intended to be an aid to identification, not works of art. They show a subject in a typical posture and are generally positioned so that key characters are visible”. This means that when a new bird appears in the district, or a hawk is seen soaring overhead, identification will be easier and more accurate than ever before.

Peter Slater is an accomplished artist, a skilled photographer and a dedicated bird observer, who has travelled extensively throughout Australia to gain first-hand knowledge of his subject.

The current volume deals with the non passerine orders of birds and so includes such major groups as the emus, the penguins, the sea birds and waders, the herons, hawks, owls, pigeons, parrots and cuckoos. These cover just under 400 different species of birds and constitute slightly more than half the Australian list. Each bird is shown in colour, and flight patterns and other details are often included as an additional aid.

A small sketch map shows the known distribution of each species and serves as a valuable check on any doubtful identification.

Several earlier-maturing South African varieties have recently been introduced on the Stoneville Research Station but have not yet borne fruit. These include Oom Sarel, Prof. Black, Prof. Neethling and Izzac Malherbe. Until these varieties can be assessed the best varieties to plant for canning peaches would be:

Code 30 would be wanted only in limited amounts to start the canning season in late January. Keimoes is suitable for planting in larger quantities, and would be the main variety used to extend the peach canning season. The Supply of Keimoes would blend into the harvest period of Golden Queen, providing a continuous supply of canning peaches from early February to mid-March. In suitably early districts, limited areas of Kakamas could be planted.

The text which complements the illustrations was prepared by a number of specialists, several of whom have already published extensively on Australian fauna. This combination has produced a rare blend of artistic merit and scientific accuracy which should be welcome both to the layman and the serious worker.

Of the minor criticisms which can be levelled at the book, perhaps the most important relates to the choice of certain popular names.

Many readers will regret that several long-standing names have been dropped, and although there are plausible reasons for most of the changes, the new names must cause confusion.

The early names have been extensively used in literature for many years, and the changes will do nothing to help the general reader.

Priced at $5.50 this book is excellent value and is not only useful to naturalists and zoologists, but to all who have an interest in the wild creatures of the bush.

—C. F. H. Jenkins