

HONEY PERSIMMON. FIG. 300.

A TALK ON PERSIMMONS.

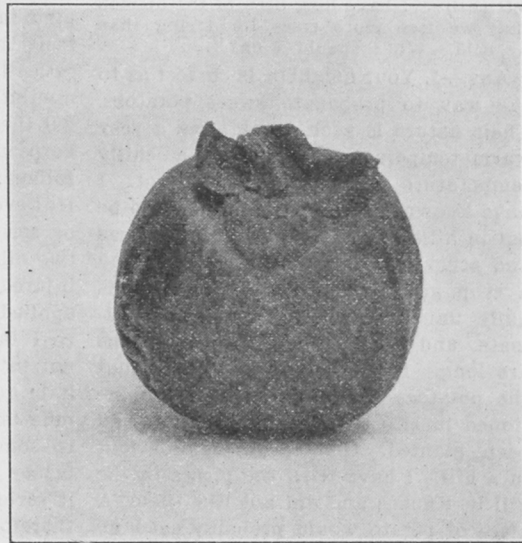
Among our native fruits, not yet much planted for home use or the market, is the American persimmon. Nearly all who have been accustomed to the fruit from their childhood, as it grew in its native thicket, are ardent admirers of the flavor of a ripe persimmon. But a green fruit stands for the essence of all that is astringent and puckering in every place it has been tested. So far as I know little improvement has been made in this fruit except by selection. Until lately, at least, there has not been much attempt to improve by crossing with the Japan type, which is really a very superior fruit, but unfortunately too tender for this climate. If a hybrid could be obtained which would add hardness to the good qualities of the best Japan kinds we should have a fruit but little if any inferior to the peach tree, much longer-lived, more reliable and just as productive. But this is a work for the future. As it now stands, quite a number of seedlings have been selected from the wilds where they grew, and named. Considering the time and work taken no very bad showing has been made. Probably fully 25 varieties have been named, fully half of which are well worth planting by the farmer, and even, perhaps, by the commercial grower. Most kinds have too many seeds, but a few are nearly seedless—that is, the smaller ones have no seeds, the medium ones from none to one, and the largest from one to two seeds. However, the so-called "seedless" varieties are usually only medium or under in size. A few varieties ripen mostly before frost here, but the large majority later—some of the wild ones hanging to the trees until Christmas. For home use soft fruits may be tolerated—these are the juiciest or have the fewest seeds; but to carry and sell the fruit must have a reasonable degree of firmness. Usually this firmness is given by the seeds, but sometimes by dryness of flesh. If the flesh can be rather dry and at the same time good in quality there is a great advantage in marketing. Some otherwise good varieties have a dirty yellow or watery color. These, of course, are all right for home use, but are poor sellers; the deep but bright yellow ones, with a blush cheek, if possible, are the sellers.

Among those that meet the market eye is the Early Golden, which is productive, of above medium size, round, fine yellow with sometimes a blush, rather dry and firm, yet of very good quality, and as its name indicates, ripens early before the wild ones come into market. It has too many seeds but not more than the average. Honey, oblate in form, is larger, later, sweeter and better in quality, just as many seeds and decidedly softer. It has the watery yellow color. Among the so-called "seedless" ones I know of none more promising, from a short acquaintance, than one from Morgan County, of this State. It is scarcely of medium size, but firm and fair in quality. In a 60-rod row of seedlings on my place two are large and good, but "go to mush" on falling from the tree, and therefore worthless for commercial purpose. The market for this fruit is improving and soon there will be a steady and increasing demand. The persimmon is not particularly difficult to propagate, and transplant. It is reasonably hardy and very productive; the tree is as hardy as the average apple. Seeds planted in the Fall as peach pits, will make a foot growth above ground and two feet at least below. I have grafted in early Spring by the ordinary cleft method, tying with cotton yarn and using not wax, applied with a brush, and in a series of years probably 80 per cent of the grafts have lived. Some bud

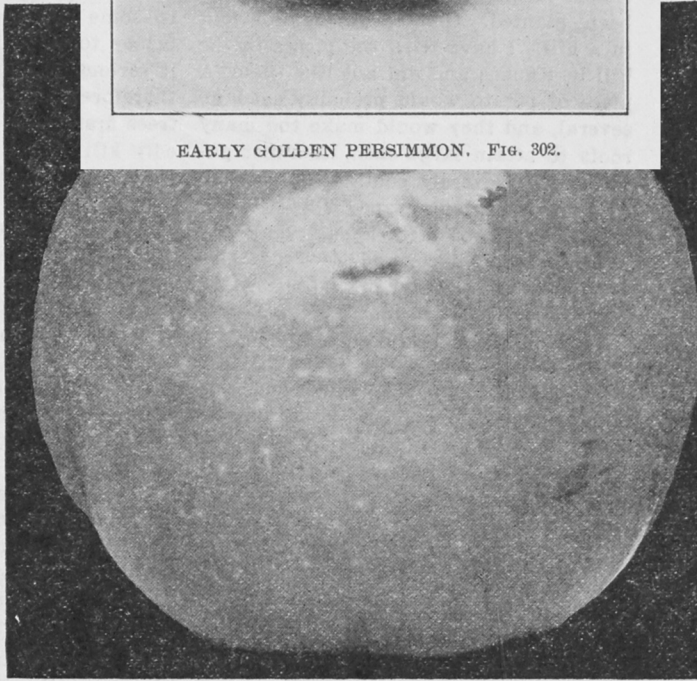
with success. If the roots are taken out to the depth of 18 inches when transplanting and replaced properly early in the Spring, there need be but little loss in setting an orchard, at the outside say 10 per cent. Illinois.

BENJ. BUCKMAN.

R. N.-Y.—Mr. Buckman has covered about all the necessary features in the selection of native persimmons for propagation. There is little doubt that this excellent wild fruit will be wonderfully improved in the course of time. Of the varieties received from Mr. Buckman, Honey, Fig. 300, is the best in flavor, but too soft for distant shipment. Early Golden, Fig. 302, came in fine condition and made a neat appearance, but was slightly astringent in flavor. The Kentucky "seedless," though small in size and dull in color was very satisfactory in flavor. These varieties are all better in quality than any of the Japan sorts that can be bought in our city markets, and if large size and firm flesh can be added without great deterioration in flavor the persimmon will become a fruit of real importance.



EARLY GOLDEN PERSIMMON. FIG. 302.

THE PRINCESS LOUISE APPLE. FROM LIFE. FIG. 301.
SEE RURALISMS, PAGE 786.

form for the potatoes. This crop was turned under while still green the first week of September, 1899, and again sown to rye. April 26, 1900, this crop was plowed down and the ground planted to potatoes. The varieties were White Bliss Triumph, second-crop seed from North Carolina, for the most part, and a variety called Junior Pride, a seedling of the above, sent me for trial by the originator, Edwin F. Harrington. I supposed I would have seed enough to plant the entire patch with those varieties, but owing, perhaps, to the fact that I cut the seed too large, I could only plant 1½ acre, from which we dug July 16 to 20, 538½ bushels. The experiment, so far as scab was concerned, while something of a disappointment, was not without its compensating advantages in the lessons taught, that seed free from scab on soil treated in this way, that is, in itself free, will produce a crop of clean tubers. This is evidenced by the fact that whereas the second-crop seed was badly infested with scab, and the greater part of the product was more so, the Junior Pride, from Mr. Harrington, was quite free from the disease, and the resultant crop was not disfigured in any way by scab.

VARIETIES, SOIL, DIGGING.—This variety, by the way, so far as my experience has gone, is very much superior to White Bliss Triumph; while the average yield is less, the quality is vastly superior, and, besides, with me it was marketable 10 days before the Triumph. The fact is, my trade has rebelled against the Triumph to such an extent that I don't think it a safe variety for me to plant. I have tried to explain to our merchants that it is owing to a lack of