



Sun-Drying California Apricots

California Has Apricots for the World

IN THE parts of the world developed and dominated by nations of the Caucasian race there are but narrow areas of land where the apricot tree lifts its head of most beautiful foliage proudly and confidently to the sky and bears great weights of golden fruit without danger of frost injury. The limitation of area over which the apricot is a sure producer is caused by the fact that of the deciduous fruits of the temperate zone the apricot is more subject to frost-injury than any other except the almond. The tree is very eager to start its growth at the touch of even winter sunshine, its blossoms and young fruit are very susceptible to injury from frost and therefore the tree demands exposures which are practically free from spring frosts to assure regular and profitable fruit-bearing. Of course horticultural art has succeeded in contriving artificial conditions afforded by training the tree against walls and by frost shelters, which secure fruit production in northerly situations, but fruit thus grown is an expensive luxury and can never figure largely in commerce. It is true also that hardier varieties of apricots have been developed, but the fruit of such varieties is inferior and the growth of it does not constitute an industry of any importance. Commercial apricot-growing requires climatic characters which favor the safe production of the best varieties in the largest quantities.

Apricot-growing as a commercial industry is pursued at several points in the countries touching the Mediterranean, in Australia, in South Africa and in California. Asia, away from the Mediterranean, has of course apricot production here and there, of great antiquity, but it does not go far in the world's commerce.