

## **Historic, archived document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



*Well Selected Oregon  
Semina Aug 29<sup>th</sup> 190*

IMPORTANT TO FRUIT GROWERS

---

GAREY'S  
"Tragedy  
Prune"

A NEW FRUIT OF WONDERFUL  
PROMISE  
A GOOD SHIPPER AND EARLY BEARER  
THE COMING PAYING PRUNE  
PLANT IT

---

ORDERS AND CORRESPONDENCE SOLICITED, ADDRESS

THOMAS A. GAREY

GAREY, SANTA BARBARA CO., CAL.

---



## GAREY'S TRAGEDY PRUNE.

### A New Fruit of Wonderful Promise.—A Good Shipper and Early Bearer.

[From the May number of *The Rural Californian*.]

It was the genius of Dean Swift, eccentric and grotesque though at times, that gave birth to the opinion that "whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together." If this is so what shall we say of the successful horticulturist who not only makes the proverbial corn and grass to grow, but introduces a new fruit that is not only a valuable acquisition to our horticultural products, but one that is destined to literally add thousands of dollars to our revenues? Thomas A. Garey, the popular nurseryman of Santa Barbara county has accomplished this very thing by the introduction of Garey Tragedy prune in Southern California.

This new fruit did not originate with Mr. Garey, but has by popular consent and to distinguish it from other varieties in Southern California become known as Garey's Tragedy prune. Its origin is explained in the following letter from O. R. Runyan of Sacramento County :

COURTLAND, Cal., May 28, 1890.

*Thomas A. Garey, Garey, Cal.* DEAR SIR.—The Tragedy prune originated with me. They are a strong grower, almost, if not quite free from scale. The fruit commences to ripen about the twentieth of June, is sweet as soon as it gets a little color, a good shipper and a good bearer. It is a larger prune than the Petite (French prune). You ask me about their harvesting qualities. In that nothing could be more desirable. They do not all ripen at once, neither do they drop when ripe, but will almost dry on the trees.

*O. R. Runyan.*

Among its many admirable qualities may be mentioned the following, all of which have been fully verified by growers who have given it an honest trial: 1—The fruit is large, of first quality, and becomes sweet as soon as it begins to color. 2—Very early, ripening in June, fully six weeks earlier than any other prune or plum. 3—Is an early, prolific and heavy bearer. 4—A first class shipper, reaching distant points in A1 condition. 5—The tree is a strong, vigorous and thrifty grower, and is practically scale proof. 6—Being early it can be marketed in the green state before other fruits of the same family are ripe. 7—It is an excellent canning fruit, and for jellies and marmalades has no superior,

8—The fruit does not drop when ripe, in fact will almost dry on the trees. 9—Is easily cultivated and harvested, requiring no extra help or implements, and consequently extremely profitable.

Instances of its remarkable growth are not wanting. In Santa Barbara county there are a number of budded yearling trees on peach bottoms set out in September from which ripe fruit was picked the following July. To be sure the quantity was small, but still it evinced remarkable thrift. These trees were from one half-inch to to an inch in diameter at the time we mention, and from four to six feet high and well branched. This year they are full of fruit buds and a handsome and profitable yield is anticipated. The demand for trees is simply immense, and the supply has already been exhausted except for dormant buds.

From Mr. Garey we learn that the following numbers of trees have been sold from his nurseries this year in the different counties: San Luis Obispo, 40,000; Ventura, 5000; Santa Barbara, 5000; Los Angeles, 10,000; San Bernardino, 20,000. Besides these many dormant buds are being contracted for and a syndicate of capitalists in San Diego county are now negotiating for 100,000 trees to be planted on a fine tract of choice land not far from National City and San Diego. On all sides comes the cry for Tragedy prune trees, and in the near future it is bound to supercede all other varieties of plums for early market fruit in the green state.

Like the present unprecedented demand for citrus trees which has exhausted all local supplies and made the importation of trees a profitable and extensive business, so has also the "boom" in prune planting taxed the nurserymen to the utmost to keep up with the demand. This has been brought about solely by the fact that many portions of Southern California are as well adapted to the prune business as to the production of oranges. And the singular coincidence between the two crops is that the prune, when grown on suitable soils in favorable localities bids fair to run the orange a hard race for profit to the grower. Numerous instances are on record where the prune has yielded from \$300 to \$500 per acre. Nor is this all. The Garey Tragedy prune commands as high as four and five and a half cents per pound in the green state by the box in the orchard. Twenty pound boxes readily command \$2 in the San Francisco market. The remarkable productiveness

of the trees and the large yields per acre make the future of the Tragedy one of great promise and a fruit that as a money maker will surely run the citrus fruits a strong race.

In the last report of the State Board of Horticulture we find the following description of this new candidate for horticultural honors:

"This valuable plum, which is of California origin, was originated at Courtland, Sacramento county, on the Sacramento river, by Mr. O. R. Runyon.

"One of the great points in favor of this prune is that the tree is scale proof, being in this respect similar to the Black Tartarian cherry. The tree is a rapid grower and of a beautiful form. The fruit is quite large, of an elongated form, with dark purple skin. The flesh is yellowish green, and has a very rich flavor, and quite sweet, being so as soon as it begins to color into ripeness. This prune is among the first of early fruits (ripening in June) and commands very high prices for shipping. In the past two years shippers have bought the fruit of all orchards of this variety much in advance of other early plums. As a shipper it has given great satisfaction."

Albert F. Kercheval, president of the Los Angeles County Board of Horticultural Commissioners, and one of the oldest and most experienced orchardists in Los Angeles county writes as follows regarding Garey's Tragedy prune:

LOS ANGELES, June, 30, 1890.

*Thomas A. Garey, Garey, Cal.* DEAR SIR.—In reply as to my opinion of the Tragedy, would say it is undoubtedly the most valuable of all plums or prunes for the following reasons: It is very early, and sweet and palatable as soon almost as it begins to turn or color, it is very large, meaty, firm and showy, hence the best prune known for shipment to distant points and centers, and as the largest dried prunes always command the most fancy prices, it would seem as though they would never have any competitors, unless something in this line should be found still superior, which is not probable. The tree itself is of the most vigorous habit, and it is certain that it is less liable to the attack of insect pests than other varieties, of this there is most ample proof in the orchards of all who have propagated it in the vicinity of other infected trees. Last year the price paid the growers at their orchards was \$1 per box of 20 pounds; this year \$1.20 and \$1.25 for the green (fresh) fruit. When it is considered that two and two and a half cents per pound for other prunes is a good and remunerative price the value of the Tragedy can be appreciated.

*A. F. Kercheval.*

Mr. Kercheval is planting largely on his fine acreage property at Rialto, in San Bernardino county. C. M.

Heintz, of this paper, is also planting out some 20 odd acres to the Tragedy prune on THE RURAL CALIFORNIAN ranch, just east of the Rialto township, and in close proximity to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks.

While casually mentioning planting, the following practical essay on prune culture was read by Mr. Garey at the meeting of the Pomological Society of Southern California at South Riverside April 2. Though dealing with prune culture generally, it applies more particularly to the planting and culture of the Tragedy. Growers interested in prune culture can "bank" on the suggestions and theories advanced as being thoroughly reliable, practical and to the point:

"The prune industry like a number of others is in its infancy at present; however, the indications are that the extension of prune orchards in the near future will be immense. The demand for a good article is practically unlimited, and will tax the entire prune growing area to its fullest extent to supply. Already we are competing successfully with the best imported prunes, and will no doubt surpass in a few years the best efforts of the old and established brands of foreign countries. That the revenue to be derived from the output of prunes grown, cured and prepared for market in California, will be extensive and gratifying there can be no question.

"Prune culture is essentially adapted to the wants of the producers of limited means, as it produces a paying crop in an exceptionally short time; it is a regular and abundant bearer; it admits of ample time for drying and preparing for market; it does not rot but ripens gradually and falls to the ground, wilts and partially cures as it lies, giving the producer sufficient time to save his crop. Let me particularize:

"1—AREA ADAPTED TO SUCCESSFUL PRUNE CULTURE.— Not all of California is adapted to prune production; only in a limited area is it a full success. In some localities the trees make a good growth but the fruit sets sparsely and the product is not satisfactory; in other situations the fruit "cracks" which lessens its value. In portions of northern and central California a good merchantable article is produced, while in Southern California, Santa Barbara county, north of the Santa Ynez mountains, has proven a perfect prune producing section, the fruit being large and fully developed; the trees grow vigorously, being early, heavy and regular. Portions of San Louis Obispo county are also prune localities; south Santa Barbara



and Ventura counties are in special localities adapted to this culture. Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange and San Diego counties in sections, situated widely asunder are prune growing districts. However, the prune is local in its habit and I would advise planting lightly until its adaptability is proven by actual experiment.

“2—METHODS OF CULTURE.—Trees should be planted 18 or 20 feet apart. Good one year old trees are the best to plant. The scarcity of trees in the nurseries has induced many to plant dormant buds, which in some instances has been a great success. Two year trees can be used successfully but the preference should be given to one year trees. The best soil is a deep rich alluvial loam, what is known as rather a heavy soil. Light rich soils are good, provided the trees are worked on peach seedlings; stiff adobe soils can be used with safety, if the Myrobolan seedling plum is used for stock. Apricot bottoms are also used on light to medium soils satisfactorily.

“3—VARIETIES.—The common French prune or Petite Prune de Agen has the field to-day, and is a first-class well tried variety. Other varieties are being experimented with with some success, notably Robe de Sargent, a large excellent fruit. For the market in its green state the Tragedy takes the lead, it has no successful competitors. At the thirteenth session of the State Board of Horticulture held at Los Angeles in March, 1890, Mr. Buck of Vacaville said of this variety: “The Tragedy prune is one that has gone to the front with a great deal of popularity as being a very early and a very sweet prune, and has brought exceedingly high prices. How long it will do so is more than I can tell, but that is the present status of the Tragedy prune. It is not raised to any extent except around Sacramento, and last year 20 pound boxes sold for \$4 and more per box in the East. It is a good sized prune; it does not compare with the large Hungarian, but then it is a fine large plum or prune.” I quote Mr. Burk fully, because I believe his description is correct, and is borne out by others who have fruited it.

“4—PRUNING.—When planting, the trees should be cut down to 18 inches, are at most two feet, thus forming the base of your future tree near the ground. The next year cut the branches in to within a foot of the stock, leaving four or five branches; the next year cut in again to a foot or 18 inches. This will form a compact, well shaped tree, the fruit will be nearer the ground and easily har-

vested; the trunk of the tree will be shaded. This insures a good, vigorous, healthy, strong limbed tree. In after years the thinning out of superfluous branches or dead limbs or brush will be all that is required.

“Prune orchards as well as all other orchards should be thoroughly and deeply tilled, the ground kept level and clear of clods and weeds. It pays to keep your orchard neat and clean.”

The unprecedented demand for young trees of the Garey Tragedy prune has completely exhausted the supply, but Mr. Garey informs us that he will bud for all who may favor him with their orders during the budding season, (July, August and September) and will be prepared to supply in dormant bud this winter or planting season, a large stock of dormant buds. He has growing fully a half million of Myrobolan plum seedlings and an equal number of peach, and from this source expects to have plenty of trees on hand to supply all demands. Budding will be done on contract at reasonable figures subject to future delivery by special arrangement with customers.

Mr. Garey has been in the nursery business in Southern California ever since 1865, being then established in Los Angeles. Besides being thoroughly familiar with every detail of the business he is also an occasional contributor to the horticultural press and has written a treatise on citrus culture. In his Semi-Tropic nurseries can be found at all times a full supply of deciduous and citrus fruit trees, olives, soft shell walnuts and a general line of ornamental plants, shrubs and trees. His nurseries being located far from other similar establishments (in fact isolated) his stock is free from scale and disease, and possesses all the qualifications of a strong and healthy growth. While a specialty is made of the Tragedy prune, Mr. Garey solicits orders for all varieties of nursery stock and is always happy to answer inquiries from the inexperienced, to give suggestions and quote estimates and prices in both large and small lots.

Parties contemplating planting fruit orchards or who are more directly interested in prune culture should write to Thomas A. Garey, Garey, Santa Barbara county, California, touching the whole subject matter, and learn of all the admirable qualities of the Garey Tragedy prune, as a fruit and a commercial proposition to engage in its culture.