HANDOUT

Title: Apricots Article 1899

Handout #: 17e

Content:

Excerpt from Ventura *Free Press* article, Oct. 6, 1899

weeks in this dry season of '99, $10,000 in cash were received by Montalvo orchardists from one San Francisco firm for apricots sold from the trees fresh. As this fruit was assorted, much yet remained to be cured and shipped later. Around this thriving town men who have fruit orchards are well prepared to care for their own fruit. This section is the true home of the apricot, and large orchards are being set each season. The coming year will be a phenomenal one in this respect. Prices have been low for dried apricots for some seasons, but this year they are much better, and this encourages putting out a much larger acreage.

Formerly apricots were cured in dryers by artificial heat, but this made the work so arduous owing to the necessity of constant attention throughout the entire 24 hours, that our orchardists now dry this fruit on trays in the open air. Large pitting sheds are erected, where tables are supplied and men, women and children are employed cutting and pitting the fruit and placing it upon trays. These are loaded on flat cars and run into smudge boxes, where they are treated by sulphur fumes to bleach and protect against insects. When sufficiently fumigated the fruit-trays are removed and wheeled on tracks made for the purpose to the drying grounds close at hand. Here they are dry in a short time and are sacked ready for hauling to the warehouse, or to car or steamer, for immediate shipment.

During the apricot season which usually lasts from three to six weeks, quite young school-boys and girls earn $1 per day and many, who become expert at pitting, earn much more.

Some fine looking walnut orchards are found here, and those who own them find them fairly profitable in some locations. One gentleman had an orchard of about 40 acres, but after experimenting for over 20 years decided other things more valuable for him to raise and has taken most all of these trees out and is planting out apricots instead. This is the outer border of the successful walnut growing district. Peaches, prunes, and almonds

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