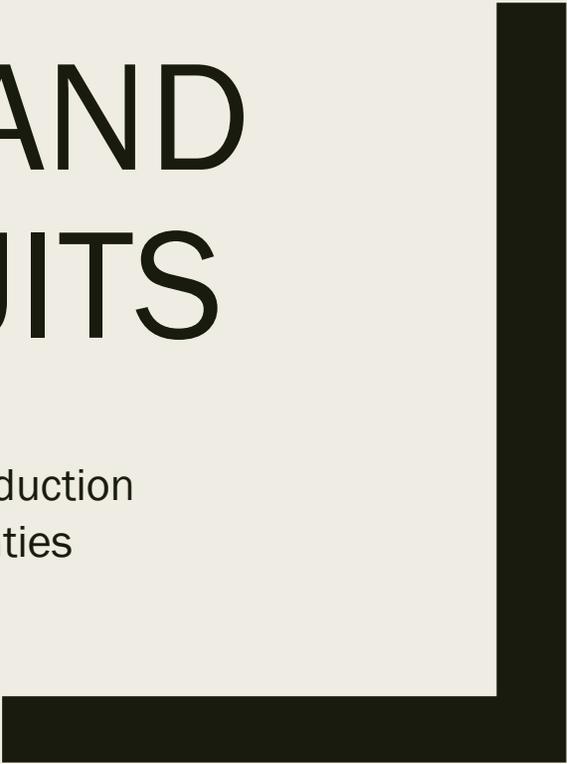




FASCINATING AND UNUSUAL FRUITS

Craig Mauney, Extension Area Agent
Commercial Vegetables and Small Fruit Production
Buncombe, Haywood & Henderson Counties



Unfamiliar Fruit

Often called minor crops or fruits

- Hard to find
 - *Specialty fruit nurseries and catalogs*
- Some fruits delicious right off the plant
- Some best only if cooked
- Others enjoyed mostly by wildlife
 - *or gardeners who have grown up with them & liked the unusual flavors*
- Every section of North America has its own native fruits – huckleberry & pawpaw
- Many make nice additions for wildlife gardens and ornamental landscapes



Elderberry Fruit

Alpine Strawberry

- **Alpine strawberry** (*Fragaria vesca*, Zones 3-10)
 - *Antique Strawberries*, pre 18th century (native European)
 - *Lack significant runners, grows well in pots*
 - *Everbearer (day neutral?)*
 - *Small very fragrant fruit*
 - *Start from plants or seed*
 - *Red & White Varieties, cool conditions, some shade*
 - *Alexandria (red, small mounding)*
 - *Rugen (larger fruit, small mounding)*



Photo by Lee Reich, Cornell

Bilberry

- **Bilberry** (*Vaccinium myrtillus*, Zones 3-8)
 - Close relative of blueberry
 - Deep blue, almost black, berries are juicy and sweet
 - One plant yields 5 pounds of small fruit
 - Plants are low and spreading, 8"-1'
 - Good in landscapes as a groundcover or near fronts of beds
 - Start from plants or seed
 - Acid soil pH 4.5
 - Also called Whortleberry



Chinese Date

- **Chinese date, Jujube** (*Ziziphus jujuba*, Zones 6-9)
 - *Not the candies but a small plum size fruit*
 - *Start green and turn reddish brown to red*
 - *Taste likened to apples, (dates flavored with apples and chocolate)*
 - *Makes great candied fruit*
 - *Small tree with glossy-green leaves, and attractive bark*
 - *15 to 20 feet tall or more, makes an attractive ornamental*
 - *Small, yellow flowers, with a fragrance described like grape soda, in mid-summer*
 - *Fruit in the fall, spread by suckers*



NMSU photo

Chokeberry

- Chokeberry (*Aronia species*, Zones 3-9)
 - Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)
 - Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)
 - Purple chokeberry (*Aronia xprunifolia*)
 - 5 to 6 feet high, purple can grow up to 10 feet
 - Red chokeberry, with red fall leaves, often a substitute for the invasive burning bush in landscapes
 - Chokeberries (don't confuse with chokecherries in the genus *Prunus*)
 - Quite adaptable to most other conditions from wet to dry soils, and part to full sun
 - Even tolerate stresses such as compacted and saline soils, and air pollution.



Purdue photo

Elderberry

■ Elderberry

(Sambucus species, Zones 3-9)

- *Flower in late June, the crop is seldom damaged by late spring frost*
- *They are attractive and easy to grow, and are great in landscape plantings*
- *Contain more phosphorus and potassium than any other temperate fruit crop, also rich in vitamin C*
- *Moist, fertile, well-drained soil with a pH between 5.5 and 6.5*
- *Space plants 6 to 10 feet apart, shallow rooted*
- *Grown in hedge rows occasionally*



Purdue photo

Lingonberry

- **Lingonberry** (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*, Zones 3-7)
 - May be confused with the bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), only fruits are more bright red & larger
 - Species often goes by the unflattering name of cowberry
 - Rather tart, berries are best cooked into preserves
 - Go well with meats, particularly wild game; used with, or in place of, cranberries
 - Spreading with rhizomes, 1 ft high, acid soil pH 4.0 to 5.5



Virginia Tech photo

Maypop

- **Maypop, Passionflower**
(*Passiflora incarnata*, Zones 6-10)
 - Spreading, herbaceous vine
 - Produces unique and attractive flowers
 - Followed by greenish, egg-shaped fruit that go “pop” when stepped on
 - Host for several butterfly species
 - The good part is the jelly-like pulp around the seeds inside, which can be eaten as you would a pomegranate



Clemson photos

Pawpaw

- **Pawpaw** (*Asimina triloba*, Zones 5-8)
 - Native to the temperate woodlands of the eastern U.S. Produces unique and attractive flowers
 - Pawpaw serves as food for Zebra Swallowtail butterfly larvae Host for several butterfly species
 - Pawpaws give a tropical feel to gardens, with large leaves that are elongated ovals similar to the avocado
 - Pawpaws can reach 25 feet tall



American Persimmon

- **American Persimmon**
(*Diospyros virginiana*, Zones 5-9)
- 35-40 foot tall deciduous tree with dark green, oval-shaped leaves
- Mostly self-fertile will bear more with a pollinator
- Astringent, fall off when ripe
- Fairly care-free and pest-free, given sun and a well-drained soil



Cornell photos

Quince Tree

- **Quince Tree** (*Cydonia oblonga*, Zones 6-8)
 - *Not ornamental flowering quince shrub (*Chaenomeles japonica* or *Chaenomeles speciosa*)*
 - *6 feet high; has attractive white, red, pink, or orange flowers early in the season*
 - *Has small fruit, poor quality fruit used for preserves*
 - *Well-behaved trees small, usually 15 to 20 feet tall, twisted habit of growth*
 - *Bloom after the apples, so there's not much danger of frost damage.*



Cornell photos

Salmonberry

- **Salmonberry** (*Rubus spectabilis*
Zones 5-9)
 - Native of western North America in zones 5-9 was a food of native peoples who, it is told, ate these fruits with salmon
 - It is related and similar to the raspberry, only the canes are perennial not biennial
 - Larger fruits vary from yellow to orange-red
 - Borne on shrubs anywhere from 3 to 12 feet high, in late summer
 - May be eaten raw, but often if tart are best in jams or cooked
 - It is a vigorous shrub might become invasive.



Some fruits deserve a try to add diversity in our cupboards.

- Asian pear
- Cranberry
- Huckleberry
- Kiwifruit
- Medlar
- Mountain Ash
- Mulberry
- Nanking Cherry
- Western Sand Cherry
- Saskatoon
- Tumbleberry



Mulberry fruit