

be distinguished, as I am informed by Mr. Rivers, whilst young, that they have been ranked by some authors as specifically distinct. Galesio does not doubt that they are distinct; even Alph. De Candolle does not appear perfectly assured of their specific identity: and an eminent botanist has quite recently³⁶ maintained that the nectarine "probably constitutes a distinct species."

Hence it may be worth while to give all the evidence on the origin of the nectarine. The facts in themselves are curious, and will hereafter have to be referred to when the important subject of bud-variation is discussed. It is asserted³⁷ that the Boston nectarine was produced from a peach-stone, and this nectarine reproduced itself by seed.³⁸ Mr. Rivers states³⁹ that from stones of three distinct varieties of the peach he raised three varieties of nectarine; and in one of these cases no nectarine grew near the parent peach-tree. In another instance Mr. Rivers raised a nectarine from a peach, and in the succeeding generation another nectarine from this nectarine.⁴⁰ Other such instances have been communicated to me, but they need not be given. Of the converse case, namely, of nectarine-stones yielding peach-trees (both free and clingstones), we have six undoubted instances recorded by Mr. Rivers; and in two of these instances the parent nectarines had been seedlings from other nectarines.⁴¹

With respect to the more curious case of full-grown peach-trees suddenly producing nectarines by bud-variation (or sports as they are called by gardeners), the evidence is superabundant; there is also good evidence of the same tree producing both peaches and nectarines, or half-and-half fruit; by this term I mean a fruit with the one-half a perfect peach, and the other half a perfect nectarine.

Peter Collinson in 1741 recorded the first case of a peach-tree producing a nectarine,⁴² and in 1766 he added two other instances. In the same work, the editor, Sir J. E. Smith, describes the more remarkable case of a tree in Norfolk which usually bore both perfect nectarines and perfect peaches; but during two seasons some of the fruit were half and half in nature.

Mr. Salisbury in 1808⁴³ records six other cases of peach-trees producing nectarines. Three of the varieties are named; viz., the Alberge, Belle Chevreuse, and Royal George. This latter tree seldom failed to produce both kinds of fruit. He gives another case of a half-and-half fruit.

At Radford in Devonshire⁴⁴ a clingstone peach, purchased as

³⁶ Godron, 'De l'Espèce,' tom. ii., 1859, p. 97.

³⁷ 'Transact. Hort. Soc.,' vol. vi. p. 394.

³⁸ Downing's 'Fruit Trees,' p. 502.

³⁹ 'Gardener's Chronicle,' 1862, p. 1195.

⁴⁰ 'Journal of Horticulture,' Feb. 5th, 1866, p. 102.

⁴¹ Mr. Rivers, in 'Gardener's

Chron.,' 1859, p. 774, 1862, p. 1195; 1865, p. 1059; and 'Journal of Hort.,' 1866, p. 102.

⁴² 'Correspondence of Linnæus,' 1821, pp. 7, 8, 70.

⁴³ 'Transact. Hort. Soc.,' vol. i. p. 103.

⁴⁴ Loudon's 'Gardener's Mag.,' 1826, vol. i. p. 471.