

varieties are now known in England, varying from pure white, through rose, to intense crimson.⁶⁴ One of these varieties, called the camellia-flowered, bears flowers above 2½ inches in diameter, whilst those of the fruit-bearing kinds do not at most exceed 1¼ inch in diameter. The flowers of the double-flowered peaches have the singular property⁶⁵ of frequently producing double or treble fruit. Finally, there is good reason to believe that the peach is an almond profoundly modified; but whatever its origin may have been, there can be no doubt that it has yielded during the last eighteen centuries many varieties, some of them strongly characterised, belonging both to the nectarine and peach form.

Apricot (Prunus armeniaca).—It is commonly admitted that this tree is descended from a single species, now found wild in the Caucasian region.⁶⁶ On this view the varieties deserve notice, because they illustrate differences supposed by some botanists to be of specific value in the almond and plum. The best monograph on the apricot is by Mr. Thompson,⁶⁷ who describes seventeen varieties. We have seen that peaches and nectarines vary in a strictly parallel manner; and in the apricot, which forms a closely allied genus, we again meet with variations analogous to those of the peach, as well as to those of the plum. The varieties differ considerably in the shape of their leaves, which are either serrated or crenated, sometimes with ear-like appendages at their bases, and sometimes with glands on the petioles. The flowers are generally alike, but are small in the Masculine. The fruit varies much in size, shape, and in having the suture little pronounced or absent; in the skin being smooth, or downy, as in the orange-apricot; and in the flesh clinging to the stone, as in the last-mentioned kind, or in readily separating from it, as in the Turkey-apricot. In all these differences we see the closest analogy with the varieties of the peach and nectarine. In the stone we have more important differences, and these in the case of the plum have been esteemed of specific value: in some apricots the stone is almost spherical, in others much flattened, being either sharp in front or blunt at both ends, sometimes channelled along the back, or with a sharp ridge along both margins. In the Moorpark, and generally in the Hemskirke, the stone presents a singular character in being perforated, with a bundle of fibres passing through the perforation from end to end. The most constant and important character, according to Thompson, is whether the kernel is bitter or sweet: yet in this respect we have a graduated difference, for the kernel is very bitter in Shipley's apricot; in the Hemskirke less bitter than in some other kinds; slightly bitter in the Royal; and "sweet like a hazel-nut" in the Breda, Angoumois, and others.

⁶⁴ 'Gardener's Chronicle,' 1857, p. 216.

⁶⁵ 'Journal of Hort. Soc.,' vol. ii. p. 283.

⁶⁶ Alph. de Candolle, 'Géograph.

Bot.,' p. 879.

⁶⁷ 'Transact. Hort. Soc.' (2nd series), vol. i. 1835, p. 56. See also 'Cat. of Fruit in Garden of Hort. Soc.,' 3rd edit. 1842.