

## LUTHER BURBANK

Japanese "rice beer" has been recently removed.

It appears that carbonic acid in the absence of oxygen produces in the fruit precisely the chemical changes necessary to transform it from an astringent and inedible fruit to a highly palatable one.

I have raised vast numbers of seedlings of the Japanese persimmon and have attempted to produce new varieties by crossing this with the American persimmon; but as yet I have not succeeded in effecting this hybridization—chiefly, perhaps, because the American species is such a shy bearer that I have had few good opportunities to cross-fertilize the two.

Now that the good qualities of the persimmon are beginning to be more generally recognized, further experiments in this direction will probably be carried out, and there is every reason to expect, arguing from analogy, that new and greatly improved races of persimmons may thus be developed.

Whoever will contrast the hybrid Japanese-American plum of today as developed in my orchards at Santa Rosa and Sebastopol with the best plums of thirty years ago will see at least a suggestion of new possibilities in the prospective union of the Japanese and American persimmon. For the best existing varieties of persimmon—the

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Japanese races are incomparably superior to the American—have such qualities as furnish a secure foundation on which to develop a really notable orchard fruit.

### FIG AND MULBERRY

Another experiment that I have tried, as yet unsuccessfully, with sub-tropical fruits, is the hybridization of the fig and the mulberry.

The fig, as is well known, grows abundantly in California. Nearly every one has learned that for many years after it was introduced, the fig was a very poor bearer, blossoming abundantly but failing to ripen satisfactory fruit. The trouble, as was presently discovered, was that the peculiar minute species of wasp which is the sole bearer of pollen from the male or so-called Capri fig to the pistillate flowers, was not found in California. So soon as this insect was imported from Italy, figs of good quality were borne in abundance by hitherto barren trees.

The fig has been under cultivation perhaps as long as any other fruit, and it is exceedingly variable when grown from seed.

I have grown seedlings in abundance, but 99 out of 100 produce worthless fruit.

You plant seeds of the white fig and you are quite as likely to get black or brown figs as white ones.