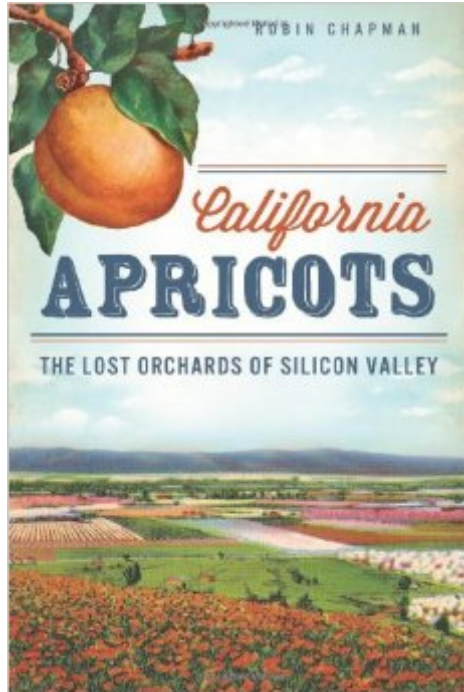


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California Apricots: Lost Orchards Of Silicon Valley (American Palate)



Synopsis

Picked warm from a tree, a California apricot opens into halves as easily as if it came with a dotted line down its center. The seed infuses the core with a hint of almond; the fruit carries the scent of citrus and jasmine; and it tastes, some say, like manna from heaven. In these pages, Robin Chapman recalls the season when the Santa Clara Valley was the largest apricot producer in the world and recounts the stories of Silicon Valley's now lost orchards. From the Spaniards in the eighteenth century who first planted apricots in the Mission Santa Clara gardens to the post-World War II families who built their homes among subdivided orchards, relive the long summer days ripe with bumper crops of this much-anticipated delicacy.

Book Information

Series: American Palate

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Arcadia Publishing (April 16, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1609497953

ISBN-13: 978-1609497958

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.3 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (26 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #739,566 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 in Â Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > By Region > West #171 in Â Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > History #240 in Â Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Fruit

Customer Reviews

Having been born and raised in Los Altos, California I found this book to be full of rich memories of my childhood and life forward. Our new home there was across the street from a large orchard where I played and had great adventures as a child. My mother spent her whole career working at Libby's cannery in Sunnyvale where most of the fruit from these orchards went. And I spent my entire career in Silicon Valley where the orchards of Santa Clara county once were. But there is more to this book. Ms.Chapman did an excellent job of researching the history of this important part of the world from it's start as a Native American paradise to the "settling" of it by the Spanish and Mexican influences then to it's bustling food production industry to it's present day place as the

High-Tech capital of the world. And with all this we even get recipes! The world is always evolving and Santa Clara and the surrounds are no exception. This is a story of the building of culture and history, something of which the United States has little of compared to places like Europe. I recommend this book to everyone who might be interested in knowing about one of the most vibrant places in the world with a history some may be surprised to learn.

I finished the book this weekend - I'm still impressed at how Ms. Chapman distilled so much information into a thoroughly enjoyable read. A lot of California history (particularly the Santa Clara valley), as well as the history of the apricot tree, but so interesting to follow. Her personal insights and remembrances, along with those of her friends and neighbors add a perspective relatable to even non-Californians. And the recipes in the back sound delicious!

As the daughter of an engineer, born in Palo Alto and raised in Los Altos from the age of 3, our home was in the middle of an apricot orchard near Loyola Corners. The last neighborhood orchard on Eva Avenue was removed to make way for housing in 1968 when I was a senior at Homestead High. Robin Chapman's "California Apricots: The Lost Orchards of Silicon Valley" has invoked so many memories from those early days: neighbors cutting 'cots, drying them in sulphur pits, the anticipation we felt as school let out for the summer, eagerly waiting for that wonderful fruit to ripen. The early history of this valley as described by Robin is vivid and filled with so many fascinating personal stories and familiar locations that it felt like a homecoming. As for the tempting recipes noted toward the end of her book, I can't wait to visit DeMartini's and see what local stone fruit they have! Thank you Robin, for your labor of love for your Dad, your family and this beautiful valley. Thank you for reminding us that we need to look back and cherish those memories.

As a 76 year old San Franciscan I read this book to learn what happened to the California apricots and apricot orchards I remembered from my youth. It appears to be an accurate if somewhat dry recounting of their fate, written in a reportorial style consistent with the authors background as a news reporter. There was little discussion of the human element, the sadness many of the apricot growing families must have felt as they experienced the passing of their way of life. Also missing was an adequate discussion of how the rare micro-climate of the Santa Clara Valley allowed apricots, particularly the king of apricots the Blenheim variety, to flourish as perhaps nowhere else on earth. (The last apricot tree the author's parents planted on their property was a Blenheim). The California's Central Valley, is too hot for Blenheim's. As someone raised on Blenheim's I find the

currently available varieties almost inedible. Arguably the highest and best use of the Santa Clara Valley, but not the most profitable, was orchards.

I've lived in California for over 30 years and though I love the history of all of our states, this book includes much I did not know about the place I now call home. The author's writing is conversational and it is clear she has a real affection for--not just the exotic apricot--but her native California's rich agricultural history. Who knew that high tech powerhouses like David Packard and Steve Jobs had their own apricot orchards? This is just one thing I discovered in *California Apricots: the Lost Orchards of Silicon Valley*. It's a great read and I highly recommend it.

A must read! The history of the apricot and the valley was most interesting. The book brought me back to my childhood growing up in Los Altos, California. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and did not want it to end.

As a proud Santa Clara Valley native with ancestors who settled in Morgan Hill at the turn of the LAST century...I enjoyed this book! Living in South Santa Clara County, we have some orchards that are still producing. Growing up here...we had many more. An excellent historical perspective of how apricots got here, how they became a huge money crop, and the decline of apricot orchards and ultimately commercial agriculture in our area. I remember when driving along Blossom Hill Road in the spring meant blossoming orchards the whole trip. Driving into Los Gatos meant being above many of the orchards and looking across a sea of blossoms covering the valley. My great-grandfather had an apricot/prune drying yard in Morgan Hill on property now covered with homes. This book brought back memories of summer heat, cutting apricots as soon as school was out, and picking prunes before school began in the fall. I enjoyed the family stories that were expertly woven into this book. It made me reminisce. Although the Santa Clara Valley is now known as Silicon Valley, this book allows one to get to know, in a small way, why it was first named The Valley of Hearts Delight.

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