

PEACHES

AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF TREES

Growers seem to be maintaining younger orchards, as nearly 62 percent of the trees reported were less than eight years old. The largest number of peach trees were in the 4 - 8 year old age group. This group comprised over 43 percent of the total trees. The youngest peach trees in the State, those not yet of full bearing age, accounted for about 18 percent of the trees.

The older trees, nine years old and over, made up about 38 percent of the tree population. The 9 -13 year old group had the second highest number of trees of the various age groups, with about 26 percent of the total, while the oldest trees (14 years and older) accounted for a little over 12 percent of the trees.

Number of Peach Trees by Age Groups and by Regions, South Carolina, 1996

| Region | Age Group (years) | | | | | Total all ages |
|----------------|-------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| | 1 yr. | 2-3 yrs. | 4-8 yrs. | 9-13 yrs. | 14 + yrs. | |
| | ----- Trees ----- | | | | | |
| Upper State | 33,600 | 59,900 | 264,900 | 179,900 | 133,700 | 672,000 |
| Ridge | 152,200 | 103,800 | 358,200 | 258,100 | 77,700 | 950,000 |
| Coastal Plains | 500 | 1,700 | 207,300 | 61,400 | 27,100 | 298,000 |
| STATE | 186,300 | 165,400 | 830,400 | 499,400 | 238,500 | 1,920,000 |

Percent of Peach Trees by Age Groups and by Regions, South Carolina, 1996

| Region | Age Group (years) | | | | | Total all ages |
|----------------|------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| | 1 yr. | 2-3 yrs. | 4-8 yrs. | 9-13 yrs. | 14 + yrs. | |
| | ----- Percent of trees ----- | | | | | |
| Upper State | 5.0 | 8.9 | 39.4 | 26.8 | 19.9 | 100.0 |
| Ridge | 16.0 | 10.9 | 37.7 | 27.2 | 8.2 | 100.0 |
| Coastal Plains | 0.2 | 0.6 | 69.5 | 20.6 | 9.1 | 100.0 |
| STATE | 9.7 | 8.6 | 43.3 | 26.0 | 12.4 | 100.0 |

VARIETIES IN COMMERCIAL ORCHARDS

"Variety is the spice of life" in South Carolina peach orchards, as producers reported well over one hundred varieties grown around the State. There have been some shifts in the most popular varieties since the 1991 survey, but Redglobe remained the leading variety in South Carolina. Cresthaven, which was not one of the top five varieties in 1991, replaced Harvester as the second leading variety while Blake and Coronet dropped out of the top five and were replaced by Cresthaven and O'Henry. Redglobe remained the leading variety in the Upper State while Redglobe replaced Harvester as the number one variety in the Ridge. Redglobe was also the leading variety in the Coastal Plains, just edging out Flordaking.

Redglobe was the leading variety with 10.5 percent of the total trees in the State. Cresthaven ranks second with 5.5 percent, Harvester was third with 5.4 percent, O'Henry was fourth with 5.2 percent and Redhaven was fifth with 4.5 percent. O'Henry was the leading variety of trees three years of age and younger followed by Redglobe, Classic, and Cresthaven. Data are shown in detail on the next four pages.