

SPECIAL FREEZE DAMAGE REPORT

MARCH 29-31, 1964

April 1, 1964

Freeze Causes Extensive Damage To
Southeastern Peach Crop

Cold weather moving into the southeastern part of the United States the night of March 29 caused extensive damage to the peach crop. Damage was most severe in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. In 1963 the peach crop in these 4 States was valued at approximately 39 million dollars. In Alabama and North Carolina, the first bloom and early fruit on strawberries were killed and it appears that late bloom in North Carolina will be sharply curtailed. Except for apples and blueberries in North Carolina, there was little damage to other crops. The full extent of the loss in these States cannot be determined at this early date, but preliminary appraisals indicate the following:

North Carolina: It appears that there was practically a complete loss of peaches, pears, and blueberries in North Carolina. Apples suffered heavy bloom damage, particularly Red Delicious and Stayman. All of the early bloom and fruit on strawberries were killed and later bloom was severely damaged.

South Carolina: Although it is too early to accurately determine the full extent of loss, a preliminary appraisal indicates that the Piedmont may have sustained a complete loss of peaches. This area usually produces nearly two-thirds of the State's peach crop. In the Ridge area, possibly three-fourths of the crop was lost. Reports range from a complete loss to half a crop. About one-fifth of the State's peaches are produced in that area. Freeze damage was less severe in other parts of South Carolina. There was no significant damage to other fruit and nut crops in the State.

Georgia: North of a line from Columbus to Macon, it appears there was almost a complete loss of peaches. The major portion of the peaches are produced south of this line where freeze damage was reported irregular with severe damage in some localities. In the Fort Valley area, peaches were 10 or more days past full bloom at the time of the freeze. Peaches in the extreme southern counties appear to have escaped serious damage.

Alabama: Freezing temperatures damaged peaches, plums, and pears in Alabama with the loss now appearing greater than was thought at first. Most of the damage occurred from the middle of Chilton county northward where there appears to be a complete loss of peaches. This area accounts for nearly three-fourths of the State's peach trees. Some peaches are left south of there. In Blount county peaches were in full bloom and the crop is considered lost. In Chilton county, peaches had reached full bloom about March 20-24. Early peaches such as the Cardinal show less damage than Elbertas and Red Havens which appear to be hardest hit.

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