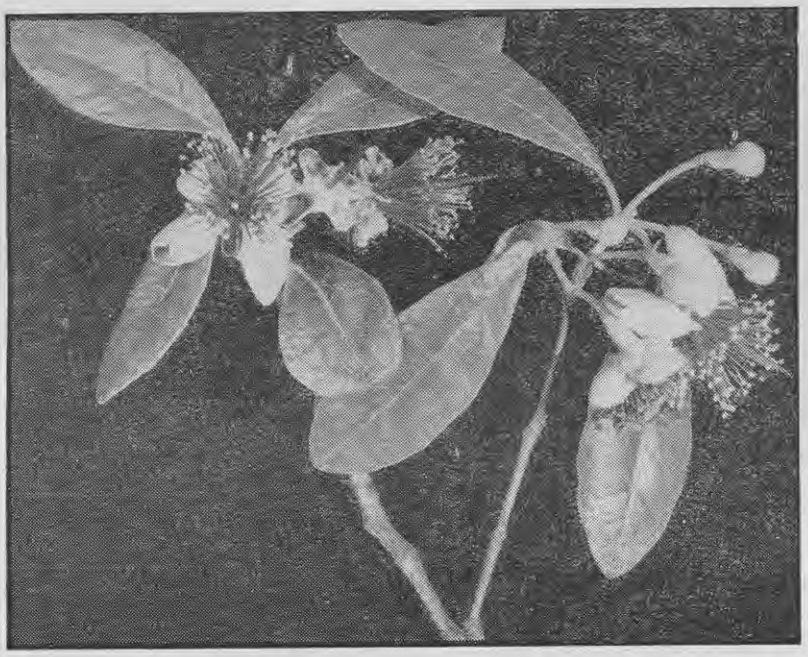

[*Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo.*
Blossoms and foliage of the feijoa.

Location

The feijoa is commonly called a sub-tropical fruit, which gives the impression that it can be grown only in a warm climate. The plant actually is hardy, for it has been known to withstand 20 degrees of frost without injury. It also resists winds remarkably well and has been used frequently for shelter purposes in many parts of the Auckland Province in orchards and domestic gardens where low-growing windbreaks are required.

It thrives best in a mild climate free from excessive humidity and high temperatures and having an annual rainfall of between 30 and 40in. At present the fruit is grown commercially in the Kerikeri, Auckland, and Tauranga districts, which are regarded as the sub-tropical fruit-growing areas of New Zealand. Owing to the hardiness of the plant there appears no reason why it should not be grown commercially in other recognised fruit-growing districts where climatic conditions in winter are not excessively severe. In home gardens it should be possible to grow feijoas in most places in New Zealand with the probable exception of those which have a wet climate or unsuitable soil conditions.

Soil

A good sandy loam rich in humus is very suitable for growing feijoas. They may be grown successfully also on clay soils which have been improved by the addition of humus; that may be done by sowing cover crops such as lupins or oats, which should be turned under when ready. Heavy soils which waterlog during wet spells should be avoided, as the feijoa will not tolerate "wet feet".

A warm aspect is desirable, but the situation seems to be of little importance provided the soil is well drained.

Shelter

In New Zealand usually small areas are grown as an adjunct to citrus and other sub-tropical fruits or on small holdings growing miscellaneous horticultural crops. Although the plants resist winds well, they grow and produce better-quality fruit if in a sheltered position. The provision of shelter in most cases is of little importance, because feijoas, being a minor crop, receive sufficient shelter from the crop established for the main horticultural undertaking. Unlike other sub-tropical fruits they may be planted to advantage on the more exposed portions of a grower's holding.

Varieties

Most of the feijoa trees planted in New Zealand have been raised from seed, and the seedlings have produced fruit which has shown great variability in size and shape. Little information has been recorded about the importation of named varieties of feijoas into New Zealand, but it is known that a single tree each of the varieties Coolidgei, Choiceana, and Superba were imported by an Auckland nurseryman some years ago. The Coolidgei and Choiceana trees are still growing and fruit annually, but the Superba tree died at an early age before fruiting.

A large number of seedlings were raised from seed of the imported Choiceana, and it appears that from the progeny of that variety four trees were selected because of their desirable qualities and each given a variety name. The names are Coolidgei, Superba, Triumph, and Mammoth.

The name Superba was given to one of the seedlings because the fruit corresponded with the description of that variety in overseas catalogues.

For commercial planting it is now customary to propagate the so-called varieties vegetatively; details are dealt with later in this article.

The table below gives a short description of each variety at present offered for sale by nurserymen.

The pollination requirements of different plants vary. Some are said to be self-sterile and others self-fertile. As no definite information on this aspect can be given, it is advisable to plant several plants or varieties together to ensure adequate pollination. It has been asserted that the variety Coolidgei is self-fertile, since isolated trees are known to have borne regularly.

Propagation

For successful commercial fruit production it is essential that all trees planted should bear regular crops of fruit of a size and type desired by the market. Seedling trees do not fulfil these conditions satisfactorily, as observations of plants so raised have indicated that there is too much variation both of size and shape in the fruit.

The most reliable method of raising young trees is to propagate them vegetatively. That may be done by striking cuttings, by layering, or by grafting on to seedling stocks. Whatever method of propagation is used, trees bearing desirable, well-shaped fruit should always be selected from which to take propagating wood.

VARIETIES OF FEIJOAS

Variety	Tree growth	Fruit shape	Fruit epidermis	Size
Coolidgei (imported)	Strong, upright	Oblong	Moderately crinkled	Medium
Coolidgei (N.Z. raised)	Strong, upright	Oblong to elongated	Moderately crinkled	Medium
Choiceana (imported)	Medium, spreading	Spherical to oval	Moderately smooth	Medium to small
Superba (N.Z. raised)	Medium, spreading and straggly	Spherical to slightly oval	Moderately smooth	Medium to small
Triumph (N.Z. raised)	Medium, upright	Short, oval, and plump, less pointed than Coolidgei	Smooth	Medium to large
Mammoth (N.Z. raised)	Strong, upright	Oval, similar to imported strain of Coolidgei	Moderately wrinkled	Large (up to 8½oz.)