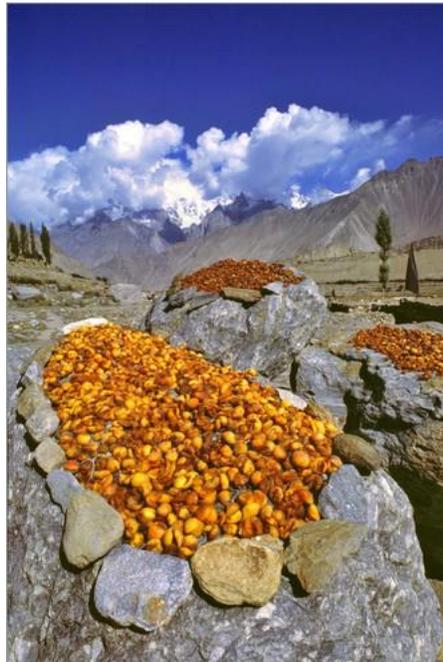




APRICOTS AND APRICOT LIKE THINGS - PLUMS, APRIUMS, PLUOTS.

These lovely fruits are definitely an eastern European, Turkish, and Armenian touchstone when it comes to fruit, although their actual origin is in doubt - apparently some dudes took apricot trees from Manchuria along the silk trail, skirting the Black Sea, and planted them in Istanbul. Turkey supplies over 50% of the dried apricots in the world.



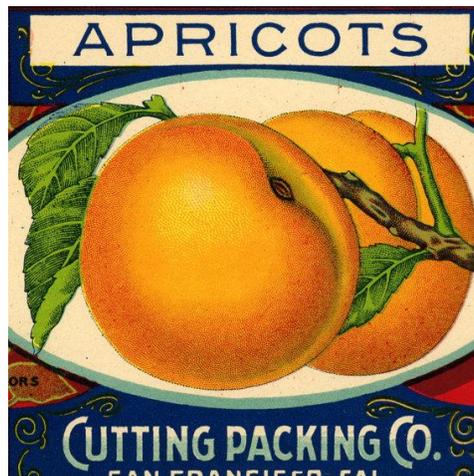
Apricots are grown in generally harsh climates - the ones we receive here in the spring come from California's San Joaquin Valley, and as summer progresses, from the Okanagan and Similkameen, and parts of eastern Washington. Cots really prefer scorching hot days in the spring and early summer, but cold nights for the rest of the year, and -25C or colder doesn't hurt the trees. You'll also find cots growing in much warmer countries, but at much higher elevations, where obviously the climate is different - hence, conventional apricots are flown from Bogota, Columbia, virtually on the equator, but grown at 3000 meters in the northern Andes. Apricots and plums are related - the main difference is in the thickness (durability) of their skins. To attract more consumers to this fruit, which is usually more expensive than peaches, breeders have produced dozens of in-between varieties - with unique flavours, and





traits of both plums and apricots, which, if they kinda' look more like plums are called pluots, and go figure, apriums if they have fuzzy skin. These new varieties are intended to also 'come on fast' - so instead of waiting for the older standards like the huge Perfection, the new hybrids start to produce harvestable fruit around April 20th in California, 6 weeks earlier than the first harvest dates of traditional varieties.

Apricots are not picked ripe because they have a very short shelf life. Like many fruits, a sugar test (Brix) lets growers know when there is enough sugar in them, because once picked, they don't get any sweeter! After harvest, cots are chilled right down to a core (pit) temperature of just above freezing, and shipped that way, then they will slowly start to ripen (soften) after a few days at room temperature, although in cold storage they can hold their firmness for 2-3 weeks.



Dapple Dandy? Moon glow? Who comes up with these names? The cots you receive from California are different varieties than we grow in B.C. because they are ready to eat when ours aren't ripe - and the difference can be 6 weeks from the start of the southern season until we start harvesting locally.

Often, local BC producers will pick fruit when it is riper - firm, but with more colour and sweeter, with the expectation that they will be sold very quickly in our domestic markets.

