

A general average drying ratio would be about 5:1. The average yield of dried peaches is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons per acre.²⁶

Peaches for drying are picked when they have a uniform yellow color, are fully mature and have begun to soften but are still reasonably firm, and can be easily cut with a sharp knife and yet retain their shape. Peaches are cut by running a sharp knife around the line of the suture so that the knife blade returns to the point where the cut began. The halves of the peach are separated, the pit removed and the two halves laid on a clean tray with the cut surfaces up (fig. 14). The

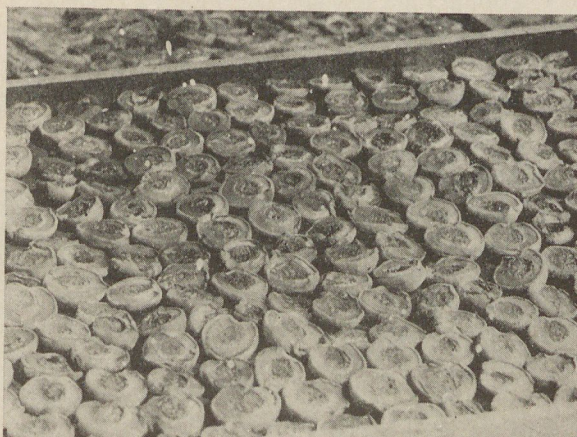


Fig. 14.—Tray of peaches in the process of drying.

full trays are placed on a low truck and when the stack is completed it is transferred to the sulfuring house (fig. 15). Peaches are normally exposed for from three to three and one-half hours to dense fumes of burning sulfur which is used at the rate of about seven pounds per ton of fresh fruit. After sulfuring is complete, indicated by the moist cut surface and disappearance of red color, the trays of peaches are transferred by truck to the dry-yard where they are exposed to the sun.

The fruit should remain exposed to direct sunshine until it is from a quarter to half dried and has acquired a uniform color. This requires from one to five days according to the temperature and air movement. The trays should then be stacked in a staggered pile with the open ends in the direction of the prevailing winds. After two to six days in the stack the fruit will be dry enough for storage as indicated by the

²⁶ Christie, A. W. and L. C. Barnard. The principles and practice of sundrying fruit. California Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 388:1-60. 1925.