



THE DEVELOPMENT OF HORTICULTURE AND THE ROLE OF FRUIT VARIETIES IN THE AGRICULTURE OF THE BUKHARA EMIRATE IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed significant changes in agrarian relations within the territory of the Bukhara Emirate. Under the economic influence of the Russian Empire, the cultivation of export-oriented agricultural products expanded throughout the region. In particular, cotton growing, horticulture, viticulture, and melon cultivation developed considerably. The introduction of new crop and fruit varieties was closely connected with the demands of both domestic and foreign trade.

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According to the researcher N.V. Khanykov, irrigated agriculture had long been developed in the Bukhara oasis, where wheat, barley, cotton, alfalfa, and various fruit trees were cultivated [1]. Favorable natural and climatic conditions, together with ancient irrigation systems, created broad opportunities for the development of horticulture in the oasis. The warm climate, long vegetation period, and abundance of sunny days made it possible to obtain high yields from vineyards and fruit trees. The foothill zones of Eastern Bukhara, with their relatively cooler climate, were particularly suitable for horticulture. The irrigated farming system also enabled the propagation of fruit trees and the adaptation of new varieties to local conditions.

According to N.N. Tursunov and K.E. Kabulov, more than twenty grape varieties were cultivated in the villages of Sina and Vakhshivor in the Denov Bekdom, Gazorak and Khufor in the Hisor Bekdom, and Passurkhi in the Boysun Bekdom. Local inhabitants combined viticulture with farming and animal husbandry. The grapes produced were sold and exchanged not only in local markets but also in neighboring regions [2]. With the strengthening of Russian economic influence in the late nineteenth century, certain changes also occurred in the agriculture of Bukhara. The construction of the Kogon railway in 1888 created opportunities to export fruits and grapes to Russian markets. As a result, raisins and

dried fruits became important export commodities. The expansion of trade relations enhanced the commercial character of horticulture.

Among the grape varieties cultivated, Kishmish, Husayni, Toifi, Charos, and Sultoni were especially popular. Kishmish and Toifi varieties were highly valued for raisin production. Because raisins could be stored for long periods, they became a particularly convenient commodity for trade. Raisins were especially important in caravan trade due to their suitability for long-distance transportation. In addition, dried fruits became one of the key commercial products of the Emirate because of their long shelf life, ease of transportation, and strong market demand. The production of dried fruits was especially developed in Bukhara, Samarkand, Qarshi, Shahrisabz, Hisor, and Eastern Bukhara. Fruits were generally dried naturally under sunlight. They were spread on rooftops, platforms, orchard edges, and shaded areas. In some cases, fruits were dipped in boiling water or treated with alkaline solutions to accelerate the drying process. The principal dried fruits included apricots, figs, apples, pears, plums, and peaches. Russian researchers and travelers noted the abundance of dried fruits in Bukhara's markets. Raisins, dried apricots, pistachios, and almonds were particularly exported to Russia. Studies indicate that dried fruits from the Bukhara Emirate even reached European markets [3].

A letter submitted by the Russian Imperial Political Agency to the Russian government in August 1911 included a petition from D.F. Stoba, a Russian citizen residing in Termez. In his petition, Stoba requested the allocation of 1,000 desyatinas of rain-fed land in the Yangiariq area of the Boysun Bekdom, located on the left bank of the Surkhan River near Termez. He planned to irrigate the land, establish an agricultural enterprise, and develop high-quality varieties of cotton, sesame, wheat, fruits, and grapes, as well as promote Karakul sheep breeding. Furthermore, taking advantage of the favorable climatic conditions of southeastern Bukhara, he intended to cultivate valuable crops such as raspberries, mandarins, tea, bamboo, and other plant species. At that time, pomegranates yielded relatively good harvests in Eastern Bukhara, whereas grapes, plums, apricots, peaches, apples, pears, and other fruit trees produced low yields and were generally of poor quality [4].

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, pomegranate cultivation was one of the most developed and profitable branches of horticulture in the Bukhara Emirate, particularly in Eastern Bukhara. Several local pomegranate varieties were cultivated in the Bukhara oasis. These varieties differed in taste, peel thickness, seed color, and storage qualities. Among the varieties widely distributed in Central Asia, including Bukhara, were the Kazaki Pomegranate and the Red-Skinned Pomegranate [5]. Some varieties were valued for their sweetness, while others were prized for their long storage life and resistance to transportation. In Eastern Bukhara, there were even villages associated with specific fruit varieties. Such fruits were exported to large markets in distant cities. For example, the Dashnobod pomegranate was cultivated over extensive areas. Due to its superior quality and large-scale production, it occupied a leading position and played an important role in the trade of the Emirate [6].

Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, efforts to develop pomegranate cultivation on a scientific basis intensified. Horticultural experimental stations operated throughout the republic, studying local varieties and selecting productive and disease-resistant types. As a

result, pomegranate orchards expanded and varietal diversity increased in the Bukhara region.

Alongside fruit trees, ornamental trees also occupied an important place in the life of the oasis. Plane trees, elms, poplars, and weeping willows were planted around the city of Bukhara, the emir's palaces, mosques, madrasas, and pilgrimage sites. These trees not only contributed to landscaping but also provided shade during the hot summer months. Plane trees and elms were particularly valued for their longevity and adaptation to local climatic conditions.

The horticultural culture of the Emirate emphasized not only fruit production but also aesthetic beauty. For instance, it is noteworthy that Emir Abdulahad successfully cultivated exotic species such as the Brazilian catalpa, Russian acacia, and Adam's tree in the four-hectare garden surrounding the Abdulahad Khan Palace, constructed between 1895 and 1904 in New Bukhara (present-day Kogon) in honor of the Russian Emperor. Russian hawthorn, a climbing plant forming natural green hedges, created a distinctive landscape around the palace grounds [7].

In conclusion, horticulture in the Bukhara oasis constituted an integral part of its ancient irrigated agricultural culture and played an important role in the regional economy. Alongside fruit trees such as apricot, grape, pomegranate, peach, and pear, ornamental species including plane tree, poplar, elm, and weeping willow contributed significantly to the natural landscape of the oasis. Ancient irrigation systems and long-standing agricultural traditions ensured the preservation and continuity of horticulture up to the present day

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