

SARDI – DRYING APRICOT VARIETY

Grower Information Guide

RiverCot 4

(Syn 37908)

South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)

'RiverCot 4' was developed at SARDI's Loxton Research Centre (LRC) in the Riverland of South Australia. A spectacularly flavoured, very juicy, sweet apricot, it is very firm and robust with a precocious, heavy cropping habit. This variety is considered mainly for drying due to a palish, plain appearance and a tendency to mark due to its high fruit sugar levels. However, it has great flavour and scores highly in consumer sensory panels for a good eating experience. It would be challenging to produce for this market. It produces dried fruit of exceptional quality.

All data presented in this guide refers to trees grown at the Loxton Research Centre (LRC) on Myrobalan H29C plum rootstock, unless specifically stated. Performance on other rootstocks is untested.



Fresh fruit of RiverCot 4 on young trees November 2017



Freshly processed fruit of RiverCot 4 December 2016

The purpose of this Grower Information Guide is to provide information to help growers make an informed decision on the planting of this apricot variety.

RiverCot 4 is a protected variety. A signed non-propagation agreement is required before tree delivery. Trees are available for commercial planting from winter 2018.

Timing of blossom:	Early season (5 Sept)
Pollination:	Self-fertile.
Cropping:	Good, precocious & consistent.
Ripening period:	Early. 5 December (Story, 14 Dec; Earlicot, 18 Nov; Moorpark, 29 Dec)
Shape:	Blocky with very compressed cheeks.
Fresh fruit size:	Large (51mm av., 57mm max)
Skin:	Pale orange with speckled red blush.
Flesh:	Light orange
Eating quality:	Excellent.
Flavour:	Excellent.
Stone:	Large and free.
Fruit firmness:	Firm at maturity.
TSS level:	Very high (21 Brix). Excellent for drying.
Cracking:	Possibly susceptible.



Fresh fruit of tree ripe RiverCot 4.

Dry ratio:	Excellent (4.3:1).
Dried fruit size:	Large.
Dried quality:	Excellent.
Dried fruit colour:	Light orange.
Dried fruit storage:	6-12 months at 25°C and 65%RH.

Table 1 History of 'RiverCot 4' trees on Myrobalan H29C plum rootstock in secondary evaluation at the Loxton Research Centre.

TREE AGE	HARVEST DATE	CROP	FRUIT SIZE (mm)	FRUIT SIZE (g)	TSS (°Brix)
1	4/12/15	Light	49	56	26
2	12/12/16	Heavy	46	56	23
3	7/12/17	Heavy	50	60	21



Dried halves of RiverCot 4 2016

The Tree: RiverCot 4 is a vigorous, spreading, spur bearing tree. It benefits from an increase in the number of leaders (6-8) to better fill space, spread vigour and control extension when grown in "free standing V" type systems. It appears well suited to pedestrian orchards planted at 4.5m by 2.5m spacing. Keep trees open to prevent green shoulders and condition fruit fruit. Summer pruning as a young tree will improve subsequent fruiting structures within the tree and reduce shading preventing a drop in fruit quality. If left untended the tree will produce long thick extension growth of little value. Capable of very large crops, these need to be managed or biennial bearing will occur with oversized less robust fruit in the off crop.

In the consumer sensory panel results shown adjacent, fresh apricot Overall Eating Experience (OEE) was very closely correlated with scores for flavour.

Disclaimer

This variety is unproven in commercial production. Testing has not been completed over a range of regions, rootstocks and management conditions. Growers wishing to plant 'RiverCot 4' should exercise appropriate caution.

This variety will be supplied with no guarantee of any kind and the purchasers accept all risks in connection with their possession or use of the variety. The variety is supplied without warranty, express or implied, of fitness for any particular purpose.

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Table 2. History of RiverCot 4 results in consumer sensory panels for fresh apricot Overall Eating Experience (OEE)

HARVEST DATE	CROP	STORAGE (days)	OEE (X/150)	TSS (Brix)	FIRM (g/mm ²)
'RiverCot 4'					
11/12/17	LM	2	110	21.3	2.1
'Earlicot'					
10/11/17	MH	9	56	11.3	2.6

The Fruit: RiverCot 4 is a superior eating experience apricot, this can be seen in the fresh apricot OEE score of 110 presented above in a 2017/18 consumer panel, compared to 'Earlicot'. The fresh apricot is very sweet and juicy with a balanced acidity and fruity complexity, overall flavour is excellent. Naturally elevated sugar levels enhance the consumer experience at higher cropping levels and less advanced maturities. The skin is plain, pale and lumpy with a speckled blush of varying intensity depending on sun exposure. Its skin is quite tough but high fruit sugar levels make it difficult to keep unmarked. The skin will russet and bronze with rubbing and handling in heat, it will also shrivel mark with rain. This is not an issue when drying. Marking is easier to control with decreased maturity. It has shown consistent excellent dry ratios in the mid to low 4's, but does need to be ripened adequately to retain shape and not boat. A dried 2016 sample tested in 2017 rated 111 & 120 for eating experience and appearance compared to Moorpark at 89 & 96 respectively. Its score of 120 for colour was the equal highest score recorded for any line for this criteria. 2017/18 testing on a cutting machine showed it cut well with few stones staying in and had very good alignment. Limited grower experience has drawn positive early commentary.

This is an outstanding drying apricot but may be too challenging for fresh market use.



RiverCot 4 sensory panel fresh fruit 2017/18