

SARDI – DRYING APRICOT VARIETY

Grower Information Guide

RiverCot 6

(Syn 22926)

South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)

'RiverCot 6' was developed at SARDI's Loxton Research Centre (LRC) in the Riverland of South Australia. An excellent high production drying apricot, it produces at both ends, reliable high fresh tonnage's and a quality dried product with good dry ratio. Well flavoured, very juicy and highly sugared it is best picked slightly early to maximise its firmness and reduce bruising. Firm with good size, it is quite robust with a precocious heavy cropping habit. This variety is mainly suitable for drying as although it has good flavour it is cosmetically pale and very plain to look at. It can also soften and can become bruise prone if too mature. Several dried fruit producers have tested this variety and been impressed by its consistent high cropping habit over several seasons and the quality of the dried product it produces.

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 6 on young trees December 2017



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 6 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 (30 Aug).
Pollination:	Self-fertile.
Cropping:	High, precocious & consistent.
Ripening period:	Early to Mid-Season. 10 December (Story, 14 Dec; Moorpark, 29 Dec).
Shape:	Roundish with slightly compressed cheeks
Fresh fruit size:	Large to very large (51mm av., 58mm max).
Skin:	Pale orange with a slight pinkish often blotchy blush
Flesh:	Pale orange.
Eating quality:	Very good.
Flavour:	Very good.
Stone:	Large and very free.
Fruit firmness:	Moderately firm at maturity.
TSS level:	Very high (20 Brix). Excellent for drying.
Cracking:	Possibly susceptible.



Fresh fruit of RiverCot 6.

Dry ratio:	Very Good (4.8:1).
Dried fruit size:	Large.
Dried quality:	Excellent.
Dried fruit colour:	Orange.
Dried fruit storage:	6-12 months at 25°C and 65%RH.

Table 1 History of ‘RiverCot 6’ 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)
2	17/12/10	Moderate Heavy	46	64	20
3	7/12/11	Moderate Heavy	55	71	22.5
4	7/12/12	Heavy	58	79	20.5
5	3/12/13	Moderate	52	84	22
6	10/12/14	Moderate	51	80	18
7	9/12/15	Heavy	52	70	20
8	16/12/16	Heavy	54	93	18
9	14/12/17	Very Heavy	44	48	18



Dried halves of RiverCot 6 2017

The Tree: RiverCot 6 is a vigorous, upright, slightly spreading, spur bearing tree. It benefits from an increase in the number of leaders (6-7) 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.

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 6’ 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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Self-fertile with strong flowers and overall bloom it is capable of very large crops. Biennial bearing has not been observed to date however, it may be advisable to practice some crop moderation on very heavy crops. Grower experience shows leaders can develop blank areas of spur extinction due to heavy clustering of fruit on these leader spurs and subsequent breakage during harvesting. It is advisable to build structure by stubbing water shoot growth from main leaders to offset against this.

The Fruit: RiverCot 6 is a superior high cropping drying apricot that not only produces high fruit volumes it will also impart good TSS levels to that crop. The fresh apricot is firm if picked slightly backward but can soften and bruise at more advanced maturities. It is great tasting, sweet and very juicy. The skin is pale and plain looking with a slight pinkish often blotchy blush. Fruit is relatively clean with some tolerance to marking and rain damage despite the high fruit sugar levels. Softening, marking and damage will be more significant on advanced fruit maturities. It has shown consistent very good dry ratios in the mid 4’s to low 5’s and seems quite forgiving on maturity. Its average dry ratio off 4.81 is very good considering the heavy crop loads the tree usually carries. The stone is very free and the fruit rarely shows stone burn. Tested over a cutting machine in 2017/18 the fruit aligned well and stones came out easily.

Dried fruit has looked visibly superior to Moorpark all but one of the 13 times it has been dried and on par the other. A 2017 dried sample tested in a consumer panel rated 92 & 94 for eating experience and appearance respectively, compared to Moorpark’s 89 & 96. Consumers preferred it for its colour and texture with other indices on par with Moorpark. This fruit came from a very heavily cropped tree and could be expected to be at the lower end of its quality range. Evidence suggest this line is vastly superior to both Story and Moorpark in its production potential and should be strongly considered by dried fruit producers.

This variety has not been fresh market consumer sensory tested as cosmetically it has challenges and would be difficult to handle in a conventional supply chain. Anecdotally, people do like to eat it fresh, as it is very sweet and super juicy. It has been sold at farmers markets to good reviews about its eating qualities, despite its plain looks which are a significant drawback. It has been used as a Riverbrite pollinator, working well in some areas where its bloom coincides. Drying grower experience with this line has been positive in a range of locations.

This is an excellent apricot for dried apricot production