

## 52574 to 52580—Continued.

52579. *PRUNUS SEBOTINA* Ehrh. Amygdalaceæ.

Capulin.

“(No. 538a. Ambato, Ecuador.) *Capulin*. Seeds from ordinary fruits. to be grown for trial as stock plants on which to graft superior varieties of this and other rosaceous fruits.

“Theodor Wolf [“Ecuador,” published at Leipzig, 1892] says, ‘The *capulin* is as distinguishing a characteristic of the Sierra as the coconut is of the coast. I do not doubt that it is indigenous, but commonly it is found in cultivation about the huts of the Indians, and in their fields and orchards.’ The distribution of this species in the interandean region of Ecuador is widespread, but it is seen in much greater abundance in some regions than in others. Beginning in the northern part of the country, it is frequent in the Provinces of Carchi and Imbabura, but not particularly so in the former. Around the Lake of San Pablo it grows in great abundance. In Pichincha Province it is only fairly common. From Latacunga to Riobamba it is one of the few trees which grows upon the cold, sandy plains, and it here attains greater economic importance, perhaps, than in any other part of the country. In the Azuay it is almost as abundant and important, however, and in certain portions of this Province, together with that of Canar, it has the appearance of an indigenous species. In Loja it is not rare, but not sufficiently abundant to play a very important part in the list of economic products. Its range in general is from 6,000 to 11,000 feet.

“The historian González Suarez recounts that the *capulin* tree was worshipped by the inhabitants of Canar Province in pre-Columbian times; and it is found in a wild, though not certainly indigenous, condition at the present time. It is a curious though not unique circumstance that it should be known throughout the country, even among the Indians who speak Quichua, under a name taken from the Aztec tongue. I have nowhere been able to find any other name than that of *capulin*; and in certain places the latter has been combined with Quichua words to make compound names such as *capulin-urcu* (the name of a certain mountain), and *sacha-capulin* (the name given to a species of *Vallea* thought to resemble the *capulin* in appearance).

“This plant, which is cultivated from Peru northward to Mexico, becomes a stout tree up to 40 or 45 feet in height. The leaves are oblong-lanceolate to lanceolate, finely serrate, and 3 to 5 inches long. The flowers, which are produced on slender racemes 3 to 8 inches long, are white and about three-quarters of an inch broad. The fruits resemble a European cherry in appearance; they are oblate or nearly round, from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in diameter, deep purplish maroon in color when fully ripe, with a thin, tender skin surrounding greenish flesh and a single hard seed. The flavor and quality of the fruit, as also the size, vary greatly; as commonly seen, the *capulin* is not over half an inch in diameter, and its flavor is disagreeably bitter. In several regions, however, there are very superior forms, well worthy of vegetative propagation. Some of the best ones are those of Cuenca and Ambato. At Catiglata, near the latter town, there is a famous tree whose fruit is large, very juicy, and as sweet as the best European cherries.”