

# NEW YORK FRUIT QUARTERLY

## Editorial

### 'Honeycrisp' Apple: Team Work and Lessons Learned

Any new apple cultivar presents challenges to growers and researchers, and 'Honeycrisp' is no exception. However, the situation with 'Honeycrisp' is unique in that consumer reaction, market acceptance, and grower enthusiasm drove the popularity of this cultivar much more rapidly than usually occurs. Therefore, our learning curve coincides with commercial production. Researchers at Cornell have joined efforts to investigate the many challenges to growing 'Honeycrisp'. These teams have made excellent progress, as evident by the research reviewed in this issue of *The Fruit Quarterly*. Additional research is underway in testing selections propagated from 'Honeycrisp' trees that had better color, more uniform color and/or a less blotchy finish. The leaf yellowing and necrosis of 'Honeycrisp' is also being investigated.

Early testing of 'Honeycrisp' revealed that disease susceptibility, management of cropping and determination of proper maturity and its effect on storage disorders (especially soft scald and bitter pit) would be priorities. Its performance in the NE-183 regional project "Multidisciplinary Evaluation of New Apple Cultivars" reconfirmed Honeycrisp's susceptibility to soft scald, bitter pit, powdery mildew, and fire blight, and its tendency toward biennial bearing.

In this issue, thinning of 'Honeycrisp' is reviewed by Jim Schupp et al., while crop load effects on maturity, storage and return bloom are covered by Terence Robinson and Chris Watkins. Maturity guidelines were developed by Jim Wargo and Chris Watkins based on their research and sensory evaluations of fruit from commercial trials harvested at different dates. Postharvest disease management has been investigated by David Rosenberger et al. Finally, the storage of 'Honeycrisp', including storage disorders, is examined by Chris Watkins et al.

This compilation of research on 'Honeycrisp' is an example of the synergy between researchers that results in valuable information being made available to growers on how to handle this potentially profitable, yet difficult, cultivar. The complexity and interactions between problems means that growers may need to evaluate the benefits of different treatments: for example, the reduction of soft scald by the use of warmer storage temperatures versus the likelihood of increasing bitter pit with this treatment. Many new varieties do not live up to our expectations, but 'Honeycrisp' is an example where a team approach to research has succeeded in lessening the risks involved in growing a new cultivar.

Growing 'Honeycrisp' is still a challenge, but growers now have more information with which to meet the challenge.

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FRONT COVER: Honeycrisp apples can be extremely attractive and very high quality, however, bitterpit and soft scald can often be serious problems for growers. In this issue, research on solving these problems is presented. Photos by Susan Brown and Chris Watkins.

BACK COVER: Research on optimum harvest dates for Honeycrisp is reported in articles by Watkins and Wargo. Photos by Jim Wargo.

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VOLUME 11 • NUMBER 3 • AUTUMN 2003

This publication is a joint effort of the New York State Horticultural Society, Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, and the New York State Apple Research and Development Program.



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