

NEW YORK FRUIT QUARTERLY

Editorial

WhiteGold®: A New White Fleshed Sweet Cherry from Geneva

Featured on the cover of this issue of the the NY Fruit Quarterly is the new white-fleshed sweet cherry named White Gold®. It was released in 2001 by Cornell University fruit breeders, after being tested as NY 13688. This cherry, which ripens in early-mid-season and is self-fertile, is now catching the attention of growers and nurseries. Commercialization of this cultivar is managed for Cornell Research Foundation by International Plant Management, Inc., a Lawrence, Michigan-based business that specializes in testing and marketing of fruit plants. WhiteGold® is the first self-fertile, light-fleshed cherry distributed for commercial release in the USA. It has considerable potential for three different markets: brining and processing markets that currently use 'Royal Ann' ('Napoleon') and 'Emperor Francis' (both of which need a good pollenizer like WhiteGold®), fresh market use in climates where 'Rainier' is not hardy, and for homeowners who want a self-fertile, light-colored cherry but have limited space.

WhiteGold® has established a fine record for consistent cropping at Geneva and in other Eastern USA grower trials in Maryland and Michigan. With moderately heavy cropping levels it has good sized, medium-large cherries that are slightly larger than 'Emperor Francis', but not as large as 'Rainier'. Stems are medium long. Pull force of fruits at maturity is similar to 'Emperor Francis'. Bloom time is early-mid-season, right around the time of 'Emperor Francis'. Tolerance of rain induced fruit cracking is rated as similar to 'Emperor Francis', which is intermediate, meaning less tolerant than 'Sam' but better than 'Rainier' and 'Gold'. Tolerance to cherry leaf spot and bacterial canker are exceptionally good.

The sweet cherry breeding program at Cornell University has also recently released Black Gold™ a dark, self-fertile variety that was also released in 2001. In 2004 this program also released two more hardy sweet cherries: BlackYork™ (NY 1725), a dark fleshed, processing cherry for use in yogurt and BlushingGold™ (NY 8182), another brining-type cherry that ripens between Emperor Francis and Gold. Ironically, just as Cornell's sweet cherry breeding program is gaining momentum, further sweet cherry breeding by Cornell University faculty may be discontinued. With my retirement in July of 2004 new breeding efforts will cease due to lack of funding for applied research for sweet cherry breeding. The situation is still evolving but if any future sweet cherry work is to be initiated at the University there will need to be grant funds available from NY growers to support the work. New York fruit growers may soon have the opportunity to vote on a research market order which could create an applied funding source for continuation of Cornell's cherry breeding and other work on stone fruits.

Robert L. Andersen
Professor and Sweet Cherry Breeder (Retired)

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FRONT COVER: BOB ANDERSEN, who will retire in July 2004 after 15 years of leading Cornell's Stone Fruit Program, is featured with his new white-fleshed sweet cherry "White Gold®."

BACK COVER: Apple Integrated Fruit Production (IFP) is an extension of IPM that also considers crop management strategies that protect the environment and food safety.

NEW YORK
FRUIT QUARTERLY
VOLUME 12 • NUMBER 2 • SUMMER 2004

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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Production: Communications Services,
NYSAES, Geneva