

Redchief (Mercier) New, Earlier Red Delicious

Back in 1975, Bill Mercier, Mercier Orchards, Blue Ridge, Georgia, noticed a limb mutation on one of his Red Delicious trees. The apples started coloring with a strong stripe much earlier than any other apples in the orchard and well ahead of an adjacent Redchief (Campbell Cultivar) orchard. The limb was mapped and budwood was taken from the various fruiting branches to propagate test trees. These trees were used in test planting in many states across the country.

Growers reported the test trees were much easier to grow than other spur type Red Delicious, yet the fruit had many of the favorable characteristics of Redchief (Campbell Cultivar). Thus, was born a new member of the Redchief family, named Redchief (Mercier Cultivar) (Test No. BM-62).

One of the striking attributes of Redchief (Mercier) is its more vigorous growth habit while maintaining its spur type characteristics, making it an easier to grow and manage spur type tree.

This new Red Delicious variety has the typical Redchief striped pattern that blends into a beautiful rich red with a depth of color slightly stronger than Redchief (Campbell). Redchief (Mercier) finishes coloring a full week ahead of Redchief (Campbell), offering even greater opportunities for early market sales.

Test plantings reveal that the tree is a heavy producer of large, typey fruit that is white fleshed.



Bill Mercier examines several Redchief (Mercier) apples, discovered in his Blue Ridge, Georgia orchard. The new spur-type Red Delicious from Hilltop is easier to grow and manage, and colors a full week ahead of Redchief (Campbell).

Hilltop horticulturists claim that because of its strong vigor, the new Redchief (Mercier) clone will be welcomed by growers who have had problems starting and growing most spur type Red Delicious cultivars.

Initial nursery stocks of this new variety are limited. Interested growers should contact Hilltop Orchards and Nurseries, Inc., P.O. Box 143, 60397 C.R. 681, Hartford, Michigan 49057.