

# Howard 17 and Premier Strawberry— Are They One and the Same?

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**D**URING recent years virus-free foundation stocks of Howard 17 or Premier have been released to the nursery trade by the United States Department of Agriculture. A few of our Michigan nurserymen have started to propagate from this virus-free foundation stock. Several others also have indicated that they plan to propagate from this stock.

At present there is some uncertainty in Michigan concerning the nomenclature of plants produced from virus-free Howard 17 or Premier. These two names have for many years been used interchangeably to designate a single variety and are considered synonymous by most persons.

Introduction of plants from virus-free stocks, however, has focused critical and close attention on the variety Howard 17 or Premier. Comparisons of virus-free stocks with regular stocks have been made in several plantings in Michigan. Plants from virus-free stocks in all of these plantings were somewhat different than plants of the so-called "regular Premier" growing nearby. These differences, were uniformly distinct and consistent at all locations. They were as follows: (1) The plants from virus-free foundation stock of Premier were lighter green than that on plants propagated from regular commercial stocks of Premier; (2) foliage of the foundation stock was more upright than that of the regular commercial stock; (3) flower stalks of the foundation stock were thicker in diameter and more rigid and upright

than those of the regular stock; (4) runner plants from foundation stock were more numerous than those from regular stock; (5) time of blossoming and fruit maturity were three to four days earlier on the regular stocks.

Plants from both stocks produced "double" or "split" fruits from primary blossoms. Yields from both stocks were about the same in most places. Fruit from foundation stock was lighter red and more acid in flavor than that from regular stock. Considerable evidence was found this past spring to indicate that plants from the foundation stock were as cold hardy in blossom, if not more so, as plants from regular stocks of Premier.

Recently I spoke with a Michigan processor who claimed that he has observed a difference in fruit color between the Eastern type Howard 17 or Premier and the so-called "Kellogg Premier". According to him, berries of the "Kellogg Premier" are deeper red in color, especially near the centers of the fruit.

Dr. George Darrow and Dr. D. H. Scott, U. S. Department of Agriculture geneticists, have stated that the virus-free foundation stock of Howard 17 came from several separate sources. Virus-free plants from all sources were propagated and produce similar plants of the type which differ from the standard commercial stocks of Premier produced by many Michigan nurserymen.

The differences described above, indicate that perhaps two separate

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“strains” or varieties of strawberries are in the nursery trade, each of which is sold either as “Howard 17” or “Premier”. Regardless of where or how the two Howard 17 or Premier types developed, it appears that each is well established in the nursery trade. The question now arises: Should plants propagated from virus-free foundation stock be sold interchangeably under the names of “Howard 17” and “Premier”, as has been the common practice in the past with regular plant stocks?

Virus-free stocks of the “Kellogg-type Premier” have not been developed. It seems probable, therefore, that there will be considerable planting of the virus-free “Eastern” type here in Michigan and other States. Our nurserymen will be faced with the problem of giving a suitable variety name to the stock to meet State certification requirements.

The following possibilities are suggested to clarify the situation: (1) “Howard 17” and “Premier” actually may be two genetically different but very similar varieties. “Howard 17” was introduced in 1909 by A. B. Howard, Belchertown, Massachusetts. “Premier” was introduced in 1912 by R. M. Kellogg, Three Rivers, Michigan. It supposedly was a seedling of unknown origin sent to Kellogg by E. H. Riche, Alton, Illinois, but has been considered by most horticulturists and nurserymen as “Howard 17”, re-named “Premier”. (2) A “strain” of Howard 17 or Premier (through mutation or from a chance seedling) may have become widely established in the nursery trade since its original introduction.



Arthur J. Farley suggests, from observations in New Jersey, that Jersey-red apple trees be kept on the hard side rather than on the soft vegetative side, to insure maximum fruit color.

## Peach Blossom Hardiness

A study of peach blossom survival following minimum temperatures of  $-1^{\circ}\text{F.}$  on February 7 and  $-5^{\circ}\text{F.}$  on February 20, 1950, at Geneva, New York has been reported by R. C. Lamb and Roger Way of the New York Agricultural Experiment Station. They have listed the tested varieties in descending order of blossom bud survival as follows: Veteran (hardest), Marigold, Oriole, Greensboro, Champion, Prairie Dawn, Rochester, Triogem, Vedette, Mikado, Rariton Rose, Sunbeam, Fisher, Redhaven, Jerseyland, Erly-Red-Fre, Golden Jubilee, Valiant, Kalhaven, Halehaven, J. H. Hale, South Haven, Early Elberta, Redelberta, Rio-Oso-Gem, Elberta, July Elberta, Sunhigh. Those varieties from Erly-Red-Fre down in the list did not keep enough blossoms to make a full crop.



## Grapes in New Jersey

Among the 300 grape varieties and selections being tested at the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, a few of the newer hybrids show promise as dessert grapes. These are as follows: the yellow-fruited Seibel 9110, Himrod, Romulus and NY. 15302; the black-fruited Schuyler; and the red-dish purple Canada 29186, and U.S.-D.A. 4032-1.—E. G. Christ, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.



Ernest J. Downing, of Madison, Ohio, reports that the Melrose apple is good in quality but lacks good color, is susceptible to fruit spot, and is a biennial bearer.