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The 'Redhaven' Peach

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'Redhaven,' the most extensively planted freestone peach cultivar in the world, was the most notable of many contributions to fruit growing made by Stanley Johnston, peach breeder and director of the Michigan State University Experiment Station at South Haven from 1920 until his death in 1969. Before 'Redhaven' appeared, it had generally been accepted that the "perfect" peach color was a golden undercolor with 25 percent red blush. 'Redhaven,' the first of the red-skinned peach cultivars was 75 to 90 percent red, setting a new standard for peach color and commanding premium prices.

In addition, 'Redhaven' had an unprecedented ability to adapt in all the important freestone peach growing areas of the world. Three characteristics of 'Redhaven' include vigor, high productivity and above average cold hardiness. However, thorough and early thinning is required to obtain peaches of large size. Ripening 30 days before 'Elberta,' the fruit's brilliant red color develops while the flesh is still firm.

In the early 1900s, the 'Elberta' peach completely dominated the peach cultivar list in practically every peach growing state in the nation. As a result, orderly marketing of peaches was practically impossible. All available cultivars maturing before 'Elberta' were too soft for commercial handling and shipping. Stanley Johnston began breeding peaches in 1924 when 85 percent of Michigan's peach crop was 'Elberta'. His primary goal was to develop early ripening, firm-fleshed cultivars.

Since the peach is native to China, the Michigan program and others like it in other states used parents derived from 'Chinese Cling.' 'Chinese Cling' resulted from a seed received in 1850 by Henry Lyons of Columbia, South Carolina. It probably originated from the southern group of Chinese cultivars which were well adapted to warm, moist conditions in the southern U.S. (2). 'Elberta' originated as a seedling of 'Chinese Cling' on the S. H. Rumph farm in Georgia in 1840 and by 1916 it comprised approximately 80 percent of the freestone peach production in the U.S. 'J. H. Hale,' which was first distributed in 1912, is a chance seedling, probably selfed, of 'Elberta', found by J. H Hale in Glastonbury, Connecticut.

The first crosses Johnston made in 1924 used the self-sterile 'H. J. Hale' as the female parent (Fig. 1). Two chance seedlings found in Michigan, 'South Haven' and 'Kalamazoo,' proved to have outstanding progeny when cross-

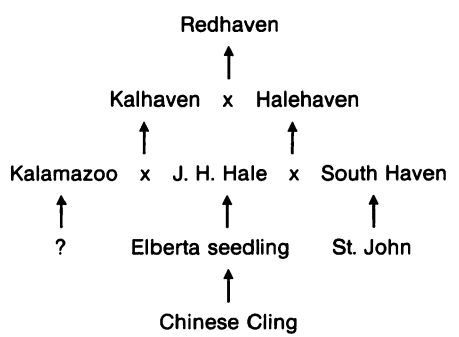

Figure 1. The pedigree of 'Redhaven' peach.

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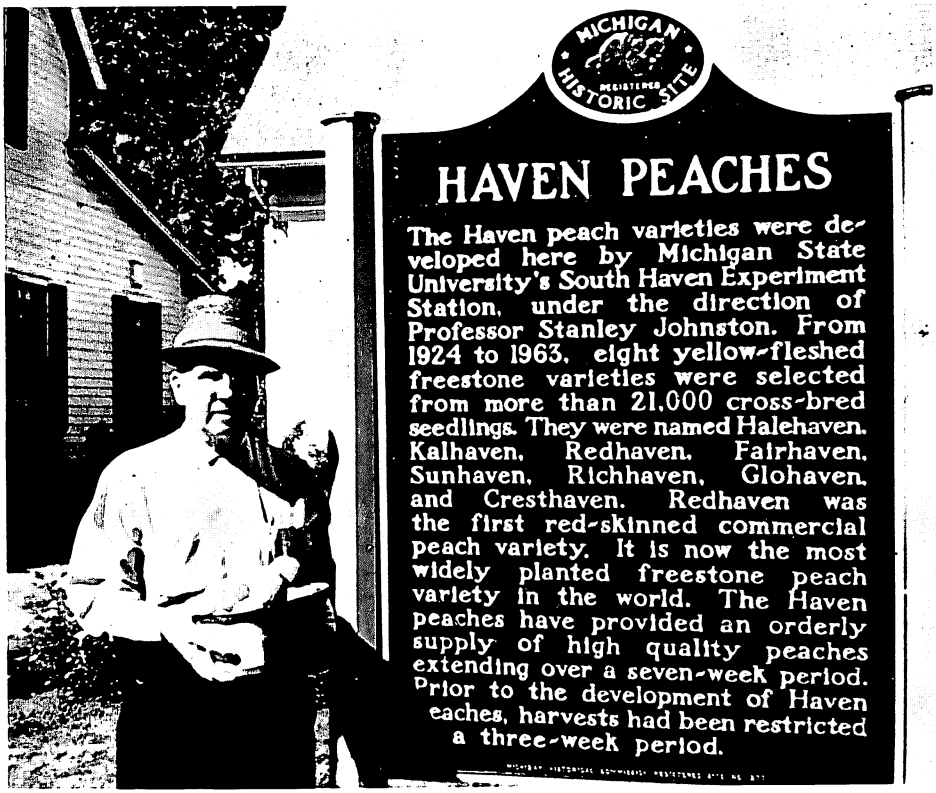

ed with 'J. H. Hale.' The first selection, 'Halehaven' was released in 1932, the second, 'Kalhaven,' in 1936. 'Halehaven' ripened 14 days and 'Kalhaven' 4 days before 'Elberta.' 'Halehaven' and 'Kalhaven,' while still numbered selections, were crossed in 1930 and the progeny 'Redhaven' was named and released 10 years later. According to Johnston (1), 'Redhaven' derived large fruit size, firm flesh, tough skin, bright yellow ground color, and a moderate amount of bright red skin color from 'J. H. Hale'; earliness, hardiness, and a bright red skin color from 'South Haven'; and, hardiness and a strong tree structure from 'Kalamazoo.'

Since its release in 1940, 'Redhaven' has been extensively used in breeding programs and some of its progeny include 'Candor,' 'Madison,' and 'Pekin.' It is also in the pedigree of numerous cultivars including 'Cresthaven,' 'Sweethaven,' 'Newhaven,' 'Jayhaven,' 'Clayton,' 'Correll,' 'Ellerbe,' 'Hamlet,' and 'Harrow Beauty.' 'Garnet Beauty' is an early ripening bud mutation of 'Redhaven.'

As early as 1960, 'Redhaven' accounted for large acreages in the U.S., Canada, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Turkey, other Mediterranean countries, some South American countries, and New Zealand. In a brief description of commonly-grown peach cultivars written about 1960, Johnston simply wrote: "Redhaven matures about 30 days before Elberta. Little needs to be said about this variety. It is the leading variety of its season in the U.S. and is doing well in many other parts of the

world." To commemorate Johnston's contributions; the State of Michigan erected a historical marker at the South Haven Station in 1966. On it are listed the eight yellow-fleshed freestone cultivars which Johnston bred in the course of 45 years of dedicated service to peach growing in America and the world.

References

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'Goldcrest' Peach

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Abstract

Additional index words. Prunus persica, fruit breeding, embryo culture.

'Goldcrest' is a very early-ripening peach (*Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch) developed by the Quality Maintenance, Genetics and Transportation Research Unit of the Horticultural Crops Research Laboratory, Fresno, Calif. from the embryo culture program. 'Goldcrest' bears attractive, well colored, round, yellow-fleshed fruit and is introduced to provide quality fruit, very early in the season for California and areas with similar climate.

Origin

'Goldcrest' resulted from open pollination of FV9-164 = (FV89-14 x Springtime) Fig. 1. 'Goldcrest' was selected in 1979 from a progeny of 207 seedlings of FV9-164, an early-ripening selection in which the seed normally aborts at fruit maturity. All seedlings were produced by embryo culture techniques (1) in 1976 and planted in the field in 1977. 'Goldcrest' was tested as P53-21 in California.

Description

'Goldcrest' is a very early-ripening peach cultivar which ripens 10 days ahead of 'Springcrest' or about May 10 at Fresno, Calif. Fruit of 'Goldcrest' are large for their maturity season (ripening 60 days after bloom), averaging 6.3 cm in diameter or 97 g with adequate thinning. The fruit are round and semi-freestone (Fig. 2). The flesh is yellow, firm, but melting and of

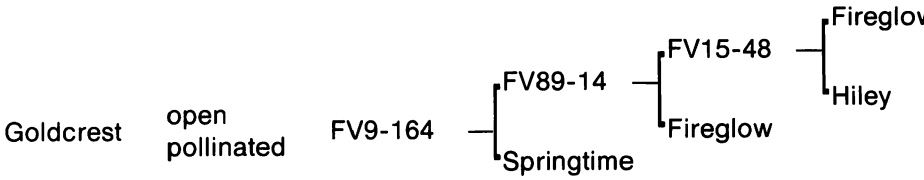

Figure 1. Pedigree of 'Goldcrest' peach.

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