

Vermilion, A New Strawberry Variety

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The Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station is releasing in April, 1950, a strawberry variety named Vermilion. Its parentage is Redstar x Pathfinder, a cross made by A. S. Colby in 1941, at Urbana, Illinois. It was selected in 1943 and has been tested as Illinois 41-31, on the University of Illinois horticultural farm, at other locations in the state, and at experiment stations throughout the United States.

Under Illinois conditions the plants of Vermilion are June-bearing and medium to high in productivity. They range between Howard 17 (Premier) and Fairpeake in vigor. They set about the same number of runners as Howard 17 but make a somewhat wider row. No red stele root rot has been found on the roots of plants growing on sites infested with this disease. The foliage is resistant to leaf spot, leaf blight, and leaf scorch. The leaves are large, cupped, thick, dark green, and very glossy. The flowers are perfect.

In Illinois, Vermilion begins to mature its fruit early, about with the first picking of Howard 17. Its harvesting period is about two weeks in length. The berries are well formed throughout the season. The fruit is medium to large, round to round-conic in shape,

smooth, very glossy, medium red, evenly colored, and very attractive in appearance. The pedicels are long. The calyx is small. The achenes are medium in number, about flush with the surface to slightly raised, and yellow to red depending upon exposure. The flesh is light red. Limited tests indicate that Vermilion ships as well as Howard 17. The fruit is medium in sugar and acid content and is more aromatic and of higher quality than most other varieties.

Vermilion is the first variety to be named as the result of a strawberry breeding program at the University of Illinois, to originate a variety resistant



to red stele root rot and having other plant and fruit characters necessary for its profitable production.

Strawberry growing was an important industry in Edgar county, Illinois, for a number of years previous to 1930, when red stele root rot was discovered in plantings in the area by H. W. Anderson of the Illinois station. This was the first record of the occurrence of the disease in North America. Since this time the Edgar County Farm Bureau, the Edgar County Strawberry Growers' Association, and the Illinois Fruit Growers' Exchange have been most cooperative in helping to carry out the Station breeding program. Of the many seedlings tested in this locality under commercial growing and shipping conditions, Illinois 41-31 has

performed so favorably that the local leaders in the industry have urged that the seedling be named and introduced to the trade, and that stock be made available for their planting needs.

The variety is being named Vermilion for the town of that name in Edgar county, Illinois, in the vicinity of which the commercial testing has been done.

The University of Illinois has no plants for sale. Only a limited number are available at present in Edgar county, and these will be allocated this spring to local growers. Stock from cooperating nurserymen will be available later.

(Paper received for publication
January 23, 1950.)

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