

## National *Prunus* Breeders Conference— 1997 Meeting

JOHN R. CLARK

The 1997 National *Prunus* Breeders Conference was hosted by the University of Arkansas and held at the University of Arkansas Fruit Substation at Clarksville, the site of the University's peach and nectarine breeding program. The meeting was held 27-28 June 1997, and hosts were John Clark, Jim Moore and Curt Rom in addition to the Fruit Substation staff. A total of 35 people attended the conference. Participants were from twelve states in the US and international participants were from Mexico, Canada, Italy, Morocco and Brazil.

A range of research activities were reported from the participants, including not only breeding but also postharvest physiology, molecular genetics and gene mapping, and germplasm preservation. Crops discussed included peach, nectarine, *Prunus* rootstocks, cherry, plum, and almond. In peach breeding, high red skin color was an emphasized trait in both public and private fresh market breeding pro-

grams. A major focus on enhancing peach quality and consumption of peaches and nectarines was discussed. The use of non-melting flesh in breeding fresh market peaches for improved postharvest handling is becoming more common. Peach tree architecture continues to be a focus in the USDA-Kearneysville program. White peach and nectarine cultivar development continues to be popular among breeders. Disease resistance continues to be a common area of emphasis, with brown rot resistance leading the way in area of concern although sources of resistance are limited. Screening of peach and nectarine material for brown rot resistance in Italy was reported. Other diseases under investigation include *Leucostoma* canker (Michigan), phomopsis fruit rot (Arkansas) and peach tree survival in rootstock breeding programs. Molecular genetics work in *Prunus* is ongoing in several states including gene mapping in California, Michigan and South Carolina.



Participants in the 1997 *Prunus* Breeders Conference hosted by the University of Arkansas. Front row: Jose Lopez-Medina, Kenda Woodburn, Salvador Perez, Terry Bacon, Annette Bjorge, Dick Okie, Bill Shane, Maria Raseira. Second Row: Andy Allen, Joe Goffreda, David Byrne, Mohamed Benzit, Wayne Sherman, Charlie Johnson, Bert Reynolds, Mark Demuth, Penelope Perkins- Veazie, Jim Moore, Bryan Blackburn, Curt Rom. Third Row: David Cain, Fred Bliss, Paul Friday, Martin Gadsby, Todd DeKryger, Bob Andersen, Dan Chapman, John Lu, Antonino Nicotra, Tom Gradziel, Clay Weeks, John Clark.