

'Pajaro' Strawberry

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'Pajaro' Strawberry was released in 1979 by Royce Bringhurst and Victor Voth of the University of California (1). There was a need at the time of its release for an improved summer-cropping cultivar for the Central Coast (Watsonville) production region of California, and 'Pajaro' quickly filled this need. It went from occupying 5% of the California strawberry acreage in 1981 to 19% in 1986 (2), and was a commercially important cultivar in California for over a decade (3).

Named for the Pajaro valley, 'Pajaro', a short-day cultivar, was selected at the University of California's South Coast Field Station, Santa Ana in 1973 from a group of CA63.7-101 x 'Sequoia' seedlings (1). It was trialed in other strawberry growing areas of the state, after being selected at South Coast, and ultimately found its place as the standard summer planted (6) cultivar in the Central Coast production area (350 miles [563 km] to the north of where it first caught the eye of Victor Voth). It was designated C45 before being given the Pajaro name and was patented using this designation (U.S. plant patent no. 4,538).

'Pajaro' will best be remembered for its ability to produce firm, symmetrical fruit of uniform size. The fruit of this cultivar generally has a medium to long conic shape, although the primary fruit are frequently wedge shaped, in varying degrees. The calyx is large and tends to be reflexed. The skin is glossy and attractive, except when rain causes a checking on the fruit surface. The flavor of 'Pajaro' fruit, by all accounts, is considered very good. The plant of 'Pajaro' is typically medium sized

and has an upright habit. These traits, combined with the moderately long pedicels on which the fruit is attached, cause the fruit to be well displayed and easy to harvest.

'Pajaro' was an important commercial cultivar in west central Florida during the 1980's (4), and has also been a major cultivar in southern Italy, New Zealand, and Australia (7). A limiting factor for the use of 'Pajaro' in humid, subtropical production areas is its extreme susceptibility to anthracnose fruit rot (caused by *Colletotrichum acutatum*). Interestingly, 'Pajaro' is a parent of 'Sweet Charlie' (5), a cultivar that is field immune to this disease.

Literature Cited

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