

Four New Blueberry Varieties, and Notes on Two Recent Introductions

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As a result of the joint evaluation program for blueberry improvement along the Eastern Seaboard and in Michigan, the United States Department of Agriculture and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station released in December of 1952 three new blueberry varieties. These were the Earliblue (15-121), to be tested commercially from Maryland northward in comparison with Weymouth; the Bluecrop (17-19), to be tested in comparison with Concord and Scammell; and the Herbert (V-25), to be tested in comparison with Jersey, Rubel, Dixi, Atlantic, and Pemberton.

In addition, the Ivanhoe (BL-32), released in North Carolina in 1951, is recommended for limited trial in New Jersey in comparison with Rancocas. There follows a brief discussion of each of the four selections mentioned. The treatment includes information on the origin and comparative plant and fruit characteristics as well as a technical description of each selection.

The Herbert (V-25) Blueberry

Origin. The Herbert originated from a cross made in 1932 by Dr. Coville of Stanley x GS-149 (Jersey x Pioneer). It was set in a field at Weymouth, New Jersey in 1934 and selected for further trial in 1938 by Dr. Darrow, (USDA), Mr. Clarke, (NJAES), and Mr. Morrow, (NCAES). It has fruited in row tests in Beltsville, Maryland, Glastonbury, Connecticut, and in the Weymouth, Pem-

berton, Whitesbog, Toms River and Martha areas of New Jersey. Limited tests have been conducted in Michigan and other parts of New England.

Comparison. The Herbert ripens with the Jersey, Rubel, and Dixi, somewhat

Fig. 1. The new Herbert blueberry—the largest and finest flavored blueberry yet.



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—Courtesy Scientific Monthly

Table I. Relative Rating of Fruit Characters for Some Mid-late and Late Blueberry Varieties based on information from many locales. (This may vary slightly from year to year.)

| Variety | Fruit Color | Fruit Size* (Cup Count) | Scar | Flavor | Texture | Cluster | Season** |
|------------|-------------|----------------------------|------|--------|---------|---------|----------|
| Herbert | 7 | 65 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 10 | |
| Dixi . . . | 7 | 70 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 | |
| Jersey . | 7 | 95 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 10 | |
| Rubel . | 7 | 160 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 10 | |
| Atlantic | 8 | 85 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 9 | |
| Coville | 8 | 65 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | |
| Berkeley | 10 | 65 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 10 | |

*Number of berries required to fill a standard $\frac{1}{2}$ pint measuring cup.

**Maturity date of fruit in terms of the number of days required after the ripening of the Weymouth variety.

earlier than Coville and later than Berkeley. It has loose clusters of large berries, equal in size to Coville and Berkeley, and much larger than Jersey and Rubel. The fruit size is maintained throughout the season, and the fruit is firm and seemingly resistant to cracking. The color of the fruit is a darkish blue, about equal to Jersey, Rubel, and Dixi, but darker than Coville.

The fruit is much better flavored than Jersey and Rubel and slightly superior to Dixi and Atlantic. Some observers rate the Herbert among the best for flavor. The plant is late flowering, quite productive and holds its crop from some time.

Herbert is compared with some other late and mid-late varieties in Table I. The scores for a given character range from 1-10, 10 being the highest rating and 1 the poorest. Ratings of from 1-5 are considered below commercial tolerance, and ratings of 6-10 are acceptable commercially.

Technical Description—Herbert:

Bush—Upright-spreading; vigorous.

Leaves—Large; dark green; yellow green when young.

Fruit—Oblate; medium blue color; firm; subacid; aromatic; scar fair; season late.

Cluster—Large; loose.

Table II. Relative Ratings of Fruit Characters of Some Early and Midseason Blueberry Varieties

| Variety | Color | Size | | Scar | Flavor | Texture | Cluster | Season (days after Wey.) |
|----------------|-------|------|-----|------|--------|---------|---------|--------------------------|
| | | (1) | (2) | | | | | |
| Earliblue . . | 8 | 8-9 | 85 | 7-8 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| Weymouth . | 5 | 8 | 90 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 0 |
| June | 6 | 7 | 110 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| Rancocas . . | 6 | 6 | 140 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 8 |
| Ivanhoe . . . | 8 | 9 | 70 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 8 |
| Stanley . . . | 7 | 7 | 110 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 10 |
| Bluecrop . . . | 9 | 8-9 | 80 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 13 |
| Berkeley . . . | 10 | 10 | 65 | 8-9 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 15-17 |

¹Score.

²Cup count—standard $\frac{1}{2}$ pint cup.

The Earliblue (15-121) Blueberry

Origin. The Earliblue originated as a cross of Stanley x Weymouth made by Dr. Coville in 1936. It was set in 1939 at Weymouth, New Jersey, and first selected in 1943 by Clarke (NJAES) and Meader and Darrow (USDA). It has fruited in row tests in Maryland and New Jersey and to a lesser extent in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Michigan.

Comparison. The Earliblue ripens about with Weymouth (Table II). In New Jersey it is generally 1-2 days later than Weymouth. All of the berries mature in June at Weymouth, New Jersey. The Earliblue has much lighter blue, firmer, finer-flavored, larger fruit than the Weymouth. It is a larger bush than Wey-

mouth and produces equally well in Maryland. The selection is recommended for trial in comparison from Maryland northward. Since it is fully as susceptible to cane canker as its parent Weymouth, it is not recommended in North Carolina. The indications are that it is among those varieties most susceptible to primary mummy berry infection so that the usual precautionary measures should be taken.

Technical Description—Earliblue:

Bush—Upright; vigorous; well-shaped.

Leaves—Medium-large; dark green.

Fruit—Oblate; light blue; very firm; subacid; good flavor; moderately aromatic; scar average; season early.

Cluster—Medium size; medium loose.



Fig. 2. Earliblue (15-121), as compared with Weymouth. It is somewhat larger, does not shatter, and is much lighter blue and higher flavored than is the Weymouth.

—Courtesy Scientific Monthly

The Bluecrop (17-19) Blueberry

Origin. Bluecrop originated from a cross of GM-37 (Jersey x Pioneer) x CU-5 (Stanley x June). It was set at Weymouth, New Jersey in 1935 and the initial selection was made in 1941 by Darrow (USDA) and Clarke (NJAES). It has fruited in row tests in Maryland and New Jersey and to a lesser extent in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Michigan.

Comparison. The Bluecrop ripens with Concord, a few days later than Stanley and earlier than Berkeley. It has fruit colored a lighter blue than any other variety except Berkeley. Fruit flavor is much above the average and the berries are larger than Stanley, Concord or Jersey, but not so large as Berkeley, Coville, or Herbert. The berries do not shatter or crack easily, and the clusters are large and medium loose. Bluecrop has been one of the most consistent croppers in New Jersey since its initial selection. However, it stems slightly, tends to over-bear, requiring skilled pruning, and doesn't root too easily from hardwood cuttings.

Technical Description—Bluecrop:

Bush—Upright; vigorous.

Leaves—Medium to below medium size.

Fruit—Roundish-oblate; very light blue; very firm; subacid; good-flavored; moderately aromatic; scar small, very good; midseason.

The Ivanhoe (BL-32) Blueberry

Origin. The Ivanhoe originated as a cross in 1933 of Z-13 (Rancocas x Carter) x Stanley. It was set at Weymouth, New Jersey in 1934 and selected in 1938 by Clarke (NJAES), Darrow (USDA), and Morrow (NCAES). It has had row tests in North Carolina, New Jersey, New England and Michigan but seems not too well adapted to Michigan. It was introduced in North Carolina in

December of 1951 for its outstanding fruit qualities and resistance to cane canker.

Comparison. Ivanhoe matures its crop with Rancocas. The plants are vigorous and productive, and the clusters are medium-sized and medium tight. Berries of the Ivanhoe are as large as Dixi with a good light blue color. The fruit is much larger than Stanley, is quite firm, possesses excellent flavor and a very good scar. The selection roots easily from softwood cuttings, but with difficulty from hardwood cuttings.

Technical Description—Ivanhoe:

Bush—Upright; vigorous; large.

Leaves—Large; dark green.

Fruit—Roundish-oblate; light blue; firm; subacid; high flavor; aromatic; scar very good; early midseason.

Cluster—Medium size; medium tight.

NOTE: Our last issue carried a picture and earlier description of Ivanhoe.—Ed.

The Berkeley and Coville Blueberries

The four varieties discussed above fit into a series of new varieties which includes also the Berkeley and Coville, introduced in 1949. As shown in Tables I and II, Berkeley ripens after Bluecrop, while Coville is later than Herbert and is the latest of all commercial varieties. Both Berkeley and Coville have produced well and are outstanding for their seasons. Berkeley is the lightest blue of all varieties and has a mild sweet flavor. The fruit of Coville is tart and is notable for holding on the plants till nearly all are ripe, while still retaining high flavor. Because of this, the cost of picking Coville can be less than that of most other varieties.

These six varieties provide a new large-fruited series of commercial varieties, all with fruit larger than Jersey, that ripen from early to late. Their sequence of ripening is Earliblue, Ivanhoe, Bluecrop, Berkeley, Herbert, and Coville.