

# Strawberry Variety Trials in Pennsylvania

A progress report has been released by the Pennsylvania State College dealing with a comparison between strawberry varieties. This report is based upon the 1950 results of trials carried on by H. K. Fleming at the Erie County Field Research Laboratory, North East, Pennsylvania.

Temple and Fairland were the best producers, but Culver, Sparkle and Variety X\* were not significantly lower. Varieties which showed a significantly lower yield than Temple include Pathfinder, Premier, Midland, Fairpeake and Catskill. Unsatisfactory performances by Premier and Catskill were attributed to virus infections.

*Temple* was outstanding in every way, except that the berries tended to turn dark and lose quality when overripe. It is recommended for commercial and home planting.

*Fairland* yielded as well as Temple. Berries were firm, medium but uniform in size, held their quality when overripe, but only fair in color. Suggested for trial as a commercial variety.

Table showing the yield and comparative berry size of strawberry varieties under trial in 1950 at the Erie County Field Research Laboratory of the Pennsylvania State College.

Variety Name	Ave. yield per acre, in qts.	Ave. size in No. of berries /lb.
Temple	12,139	78
Fairland	12,139	89
Culver	11,500	100
Sparkle	10,425	118
Variety X	10,396	66
Pathfinder	9,757	79
Premier	7,608	...
Midland	5,924	85
Fairpeake	5,518	89
Catskill	4,704	...

\*Obtained from Mr. G. A. Frantz, West Springfield, Pennsylvania.

*Culver*, maturing with Fairland, yielded well, but berries were small and soft enough to bruise easily. Leaves wilted easily during dry weather, suggesting that it might benefit from irrigation.

*Sparkle* had Culver's faults as to small berry size and a tendency to wilt during dry spells. However, berries were more attractive and firmer than Culver, and are considered excellent for freezing. Recommended for trial where a superior frozen product is sought.

*Variety X*, with the same season as Fairpeake, was a large, firm, light colored berry of the Robinson type. It produced runner plants profusely and also yielded well. This new variety should eventually have a place in commercial plantings where lateness is needed.

*Pathfinder*, ripening with Temple, produced only a fair crop. Berries were of good size but soft and only fair in quality.

*Midland* produced few runners. Mother plants and runner plants produced well, but yield on an acreage basis was poor. Berries were good in size, firm and excellent in quality. It might prove itself a good, very early, commercial or home garden variety, under the hill system or narrow matted row.

*Fairpeake*, a late high quality berry, showed faults similar to those of Midland.

Limited tests with several of the newer varieties indicated the following:

*Essex* (N. Y. 7225), very early, produced attractive, light red berries of good quality, medium to small in size and too soft for commercial use. It made a full matted row and yielded well.

*Valentine*, very early, produced berries which were firmer than Essex, rather dark in color and medium in size.

*Great Bay*, ripening with Sparkle,

yielded heavily from a good matted row, the berries were large but rough, very soft and inferior in flavor.

*Empire* (N. Y. 25460), maturing with *Sparkle*, produced firm, large bright red

berries, high in quality. Promising for commercial planting.

*Erie* (N. Y. 28340) was similar to *Empire*, with attractive medium red berries, but only fair in quality.

## The Meteor Cherry

The Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station introduced the Meteor, red tart cherry, in December, 1952. It is a cross between Montmorency and a very hardy, small-fruited, medium dark red, unnamed cherry obtained from the Dominion of Canada Agricultural Experiment Station, Morden, Manitoba. This new variety, together with Northstar, introduced in 1950, make cherry growing possible in Minnesota and other northern regions. Meteor is similar to Montmorency in size, appearance, and quality, and ripens about a week after Northstar.

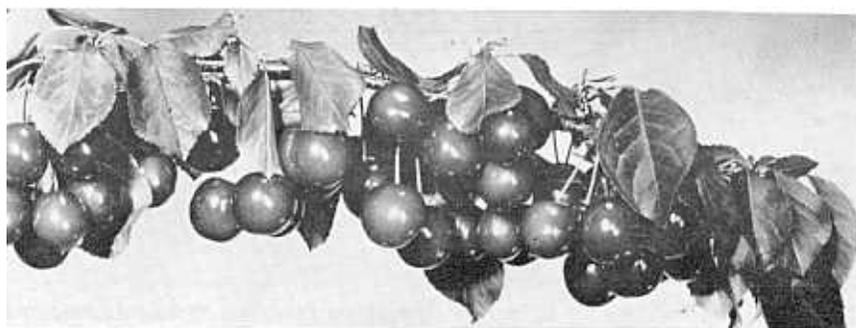
Meteor was selected by W. R. Leslie, superintendent of the station, from seedlings grown from seed he obtained from A. P. Stevenson of Morden. Mr. Stevenson had been growing seedlings from the Russian varieties Vladimir and Shubianca. Thus the male parent of Meteor had been developed by selection from Russian strains and probably represented one of the most hardy sources of red tart cherry available to American fruit breeders.

The first fruit were obtained from Meteor in 1944, and since then this

new variety has never failed to set a heavy crop. It carried a full crop in 1948 when the fruit buds of nearly all other cherry selections were severely injured. In 1952, the Meteor trees produced half of a crop following a winter which resulted in very severe injury to fruit buds of many stone fruits.

The tree of Meteor is strong, vigorous, upright and moderately spreading. Its leaves are unusually large, highly resistant to leaf spot, and form a dense luxuriant canopy.

Its fruit are large to very large, blocky roundish-oval, flattened at the ends, apex is slightly depressed; cavity is of medium size; suture is a faint line; stem is medium in length and thickness. The color of the fruit is a very attractive clear, light, bright red; the skin is thin and tender. The flesh is light, bright yellow, medium firm and medium juicy. Flavor of the fruit is pleasant, mildly acid, and very good in quality. The stone is small, long oval, and very free. Meteor ripens about a week to ten days later than Northstar or about midseason in relation to standard varieties of red tart cherries.—G.M.K.



The Meteor Cherry

Courtesy of Andrews Nursery Co., Minn.