

The Sam Cherry

by

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The Summerland Experimental Station has just introduced its third promising commercial black sweet cherry. This variety, which has been named Sam, maintains the tradition of high quality, firmness and productiveness which was set by the Station's two former cherry introductions, Van and Star.

Sam is an open-pollinated seedling of V-160140, which is an open-pollinated seedling of Windsor from the Horticultural Experiment Station at Vineland, Ontario. Sam originated at the Summerland Station. The seed was collected in 1938 by A. J. Mann and the original tree

planted in the spring of 1940. The selection was made by A. J. Mann in 1946, and further tested for seven years. It was finally named and commercially introduced in July, 1953, the name Sam being formed by combining the initials of Summerland with those of the originator.

The original tree of Sam is large, vigorous, healthy, and shows a strong and desirable framework. During the moderately severe winter of 1942-'43, Sam appeared hardy. However, during the winter of 1949-'50, the most severe on record, the original tree was injured some. The variety may, therefore, be comparable to Bing in tree-hardiness. In that same winter Sam appeared to be fairly bud-hardy, possibly being comparable to Lambert. The tree is productive, the fruit sets well and is well distributed. A heavy June drop is characteristic of the variety, nevertheless Sam produces an abundance of good sized fruit.

Sam is self-sterile and requires cross-pollination. It appears to be inter-fertile with Bing, Lambert and Van. With Star it has been reasonably inter-fertile, although results have been variable.

The fruit of this variety is black and resembles Deacon in shape. It is as large as Bing or Lambert, firm, of good quality, shows some resistance to cracking, and is satisfactory for canning. Its season is about seven to ten days earlier than Bing. Sam can be distinguished from Bing, Deacon, Star and Van because it possesses all of the following fruit characteristics: Its roundish-conic shape distinguishes Sam from Bing and Van; its long stem distinguishes it from Van; and a medium-sized roundish pit distinguishes it from Deacon and Star, in both

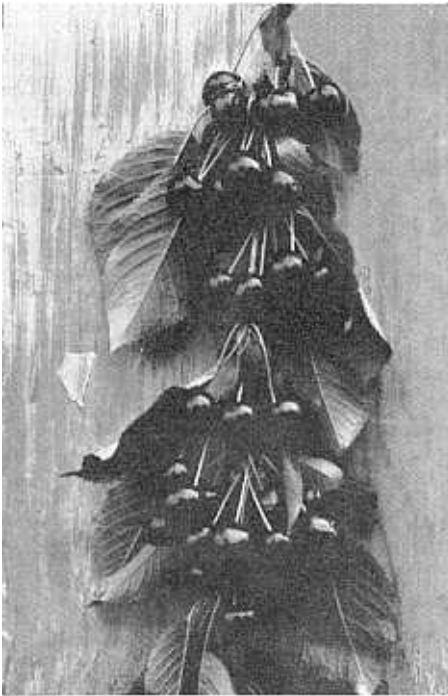


Fig. The Summerland Experimental Station's new cherry, Sam.

of which the pit is large and oval in shape.

Comparing Sam with Star, both varieties are recommended for commercial trial. They are similar in season, Star being slightly earlier. Both are firm cherries. Star probably has slightly higher dessert quality, but Sam appears to be somewhat more resistant to cracking. Although Sam is being introduced as an alternative to Star, it is impossible to foresee which of the two varieties will

prove superior when grown over a long period under a wide range of conditions. It is felt that, in due course, one or the other, or both, may make a contribution to the cherry industry.

The Sam cherry is promising and is being recommended for limited commercial trial. Budwood is being distributed only to commercial nurseries, and trees should be available from these firms in 1955.

When to Test Peach Varieties for Flavor

by

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There has been very little work done on the proper stage of maturity at which peach varieties should be judged for flavor. It has been customary for me, in my variety testing, to pick peaches on the firm-ripe side and allow them to become fully ripe before testing them, and also to taste the tree ripened fruit. I have run into several cases where, in my opinion and the opinion of a few of those around me, those peaches that were allowed to ripen off the tree were superior to those that ripened on the tree. The most noted example of that is the Merrill Beauty.

In my early notes on Merrill Beauty, my judgment on flavor varied, depending on when I happened to look at it. One time my notes would say "flavor outstanding," and at another time, "flavor average." This puzzled me for some time, and for a while I decided I would not introduce this variety. Later, I decided it was good enough to introduce, in spite of its average flavor.

When I started to produce Merrill

Beauty commercially, I set aside a number of boxes of fruit, in various stages of maturity, from very green to soft-ripe. Observations in all cases indicated that the tree-ripened fruit was definitely inferior, tending to have an over-ripe flavor, like that of peaches that are allowed to hang on the tree until they have been soft for several days. Those that were picked firm-ripe, and even on the green side of firm-ripe, were tops for eating when ripened off the tree. Even those that were picked very green developed flavor that was as good if not better than those picked ripe.

I have seen the same to hold true with other peach varieties, although not quite to the extreme that it occurs in Merrill Beauty. It would be interesting to get the observations of others on this matter. It is certainly an important problem with me. In my own opinion, since most varieties are picked commercially when the fruit is firm-ripe, one should pick them at this stage, allow the fruit to ripen up and then judge for flavor.