# Fletcher, Frontenac and Fulton Strawberries

GEORGE L. SLATE and JOHN WATSON*
Geneva, New York

The strawberry varieties Fletcher, Frontenac and Fulton, were introduced by the New York Agricultural Experiment Station at the annual meeting of the New York State Fruit Testing Cooperative Association, Inc. in September, 1959. Their place in the strawberry industry will depend ultimately on their performance in growers' plantings and on the market.

*Fletcher* (N.Y. 423) was produced by crossing Midland and Suwannee in 1949, and was selected in 1951. The name Fletcher was given in honor of Dr. S. W. Fletcher, the author of two books and several papers on strawberries. Dr. Fletcher, for many years Professor of Horticulture, Dean and Director of Research at the School of Agriculture at Pennsylvania State University, is now Dean Emeritus.

The plants of Fletcher are vigorous and make a full fruiting row each year. Crops have been equal to those of other standard varieties. The foliage has been free from leaf spot, scorch and mildew. The berries are large at the start, but average medium size throughout the season. They are conic to slightly wedge-conic, medium red in color, glossy and attractive. The skin is about as firm as that of Sparkle, and much better than Catskill. The flavor is subacid and the quality very good. The ripening season is two or three days later than Sparkle.

Fletcher possesses a rare combination of characteristics—production, firmess, and high quality for home use. Fletcher is excellent for freezing, being slightly better than Sparkle, Frontenac and Eden, all of which are very good for freezing.

*Frontenac* (N.Y. 96) originated as a cross made in 1945 between Erie and a selection of Fairfax x Dresden. It was selected in 1947. Frontenac has been distributed for several years by the Fruit Testing Association as N.Y.-96. Its performance indicates that it deserves a more extensive trial.

The plants are unusually large and vigorous, but produce fewer runners than most varieties. They apparently suffer more from drought than some varieties, but with adequate moisture the crops are heavy. When irrigated, Frontenac yielded at the rate of 18,000 quarts per acre under the hill system.

The berries are large, conic, medium red in color, and attractive in appearance. The skin is fairly tough and the flesh is firm. The flavor is moderately acid and the quality is good. Frontenac ripens a few days later than Sparkle, and is equal to Sparkle and Eden in freezing quality.

Frontenac is recommended for commercial planting on a trial basis because of its productiveness, late ripening, firmness and freezing quality. For the home garden it is superior in quality and firmness to Robinson and Premier, and it produces far fewer runner plants, although enough for a productive fruiting row.

*Fulton* (N.Y. 223) was produced by crossing Starbright, an unusually firm U.S.D.A. variety, with Pathfinder, a soft, very productive variety. The cross was made in 1947 and Fulton was selected in 1949.

The plants are vigorous, productive, and free from leaf diseases. Runner production is adequate for a good fruiting row. The berries are mostly

*Professor and Research Associate, respectively, N. Y. Ag. Exp. Sta.

of medium size, conic, medium red and attractive in appearance. The skin is tougher and the flesh firmer than that of many of the commonly grown varieties. The flavor is subacid and the quality fair. Fulton ripens shortly after Catskill. It is satisfactory for freezing, but not equal to Fletcher, Frontenac and Sparkle for that purpose.

In a dry season fruit size is sometimes smaller than desirable, but with adequate rainfall or supplementary irrigation size is satisfactory. The berries have a slightly seedy appearance, but not objectionably so.

Fulton is being introduced for trial for commercial planting because of its unusual firmness. The premium that is being paid for firm berries on the auction markets in New York is the principal reason for introducing this variety.

## American Strawberry Varieties Succeed in Okinawa

During a two-year assignment as agricultural consultant to the University of Ryukyus, Okinawa, the writer had an excellent opportunity to apply his knowledge of the varietal behavior of strawberries. Japanese varieties had been tried in Okinawa (which is about 900 miles south of Japan), but these varieties failed to produce runners and the plants soon "ran-out". Apparently the varieties were not adapted to the Okinawa climate which is similar to that of Florida. Varieties had to be found which were adapted to the temperature and day-length conditions prevailing in Okinawa.

It was obvious that American varieties now grown in the southern states should be tried. Dr. D. H. Scott, Beltsville, Maryland was contacted as to possible suitable varieties to test. He suggested Albritton, Dixieland, Blakemore, Tennessee Beauty, Klonmore, Florida-90, Missionary and Pocahontas. These varieties were ordered from a Maryland nursery and flown to Okinawa where they were planted at different locations for variety adaptation tests.

The first results were that most of these varieties grew well and produced runners soon after planting, in contrast to the Japanese varieties which remained in a single hill.

Mr. Tomoyose, Horticulturist at the University reported in a recent letter that during January, February and March the Albritton variety was most productive and it had also been most tolerant to heat during the 90°F. summer months. Next in order come Dixieland and Florida-90 followed by Missionary and Pocahontas. Blakemore, Tennessee Beauty and Klonmore are not so productive and not as resistant to the heat. He adds that they have some problems with snails, ants and flies eating the fruit, but aside from this he has high hopes for a new strawberry industry in Okinawa. —*R. F. Carlson, Mich. State Univ., East Lansing, Mich.*

## Breeding Blueberries for South

Fruit breeders of the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station are attempting to develop blueberry varieties adapted to Florida conditions. R. H. Sharpe reports that they now have about 4000 hybrid seedlings under test and some 9000 hybrid seed planted this past fall. Parents of these hybrids include a number of the Highbush varieties introduced by the U. S. D. A., the Rabbiteye type *(Vaccinium ashei)* which was once extensively planted in northern Florida, and *Vaccinium darrowi,* a native species of central Florida.