Blueberry Breeding in Georgia

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The vigor and productivity of plants of the rabbiteye blueberry *(Vaccinium ashei)* set in 1925 at the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, Georgia, indicated commercial possibilities. A collection of these varieties selected from the wild in Florida and Georgia was made and a breeding program, in cooperation with the U. S. D. A., was begun in 1940. Since initiation of this program, about 16,000 seedlings have fruited, an additional 6,000 were set in the field during the past two years, and 1,500 other seedlings have been potted from crosses made during 1959.

Several approaches have been made to the development of blueberry varieties for the South. These have been as follows: (1) crosses of the hexaploid rabbiteye varieties, (2) crosses of the hexaploid rabbiteye and the hexaploid species *V. conatablaei,* (3) crosses of the hexaploid rabbiteye and the tetraploid highbush blueberry *(V. australe),* (4) crosses of the tetraploid Florida Evergreen blueberry *(V. myrsinites)* and the northern highbush, (5) crosses of a "synthetic tetraploid" and northern highbush varieties, and (6) crosses of a Georgia native highbush selection with improved varieties of northern highbush blueberry.

The greatest immediate possibilities seem to lie in improvements made by crossing the rabbiteye varieties. Much progress has been made in increasing fruit size, improving color, reducing seed size and length of ripening period. To date, 94 seedlings from the breeding program have been selected for detailed study and evaluation. These include 69 selections from progenies from rabbiteye crosses, four from rabbiteye × *V constablaei,* four from rabbiteye × highbush, six from highbush × Florida Evergreen, and 11 selections from highbush × highbush progenies.

As a result of the breeding program four varieties have been named and released. Of these, Callaway and Coastal were introduced in 1950, and Homebell and Tifblue in 1955. The latter varieties are being planted in small commercial plantings and are replacing Callaway and Coastal. A fifth variety is being increased for possible release in the 1960–61 season.

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Early Summer Ripening Pear in Yugoslavia

A most interesting pear has been found by Dr. L. F. Hough, of Rutgers University, while plant exploring in Yugoslavia in 1959–60. Dr. Hough reports (N. J. Hort. News, July 1960) that pears from this tree were ripe and of good quality in the middle of June. They were small, soft, dropped badly and did not hold up well.

Pollen collected from this unusual pear was used in making crosses with pears in the orchard of the Fruit Experiment Station at Cacak, Yugoslavia. Seeds from these crosses were shipped back to Rutgers, and the seedlings are now growing on the University farms at New Brunswick.