

Naming New Fruit Varieties

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There seems to be quite a bit of confusion on the subject of naming new fruit varieties since the adoption of the new International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, the recent changes in the trademark laws, and the bountiful profusion of new fruits being released. Here are the rules as I interpret them.

New fruit names should first be registered with the Register of New Fruit and Nut Varieties, located at the University of California in Davis. Doctors R. M. Brooks and H. P. Olmo are responsible for the Register, and will supply information cards to be filled out by those who are naming varieties. Information required for the Register includes parentage of the variety, the date it was discovered or selected, date of commercial introduction, and the most valuable characteristics of the new variety.

The first person or organization to register the name of a new variety and properly publish it has priority for the name so long as the variety is propagated, distributed, and grown. If the time should arrive when the cultivation of a variety ceases, then the name may be reused with the approval of the registration authority. This procedure will prevent complications as arose from the recent introduction of the Stark Earli-Blaze apple, followed a year or so later by the introduction of the apple variety Blaze by the University of Illinois. Here in our experimental orchards, it now appears that Blaze actually ripens ahead of our Earli-Blaze. This will certainly cause a degree of confusion and misunderstanding, since both varieties are very promising summer apples.

Variety names should be short, preferably one or two short words, such as 'Red Robin' peach, 'Vista' cherry and 'Nubiana' plum. Numbers should not be used in naming fruit varieties, except while selections are still under trial, and before their release to the public. Names that exaggerate the merits of a variety should be avoided. Red mutations should be named and registered, with the name of the discoverer or location of origin prefixing the variety on which the mutation occurred; for example, 'Wood Delicious, and 'Summerland McIntosh'.

Proper publication consists of listing the variety in the Register at the University of California. This is the safest and preferred method, and one which will prevent duplication and improper naming of new varieties. Other valid publication would include printing the name in a nursery catalog, or in a book or periodical of good distribution, accompanied by a description of the new variety.

As a result of recent legislation, it is no longer possible to trademark the name of a variety. On the other hand, a trademark can be obtained for a group of varieties. For example, we have obtained the trademark 'Stark' to cover varieties of several fruits that we have introduced in recent years, as well as exclusive varieties that we will introduce in the future.

The intent of the new International Code is to standardize, simplify, and improve the naming of any new and improved varieties introduced since the publication of the Code, but not to change the names of varieties already in commerce.