

Earlibelle, a New Fresh Market Strawberry Variety for the Southern United States

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Earlibelle, a new fresh market strawberry for southern United States, has been released by the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station and the Crops Research Division, Agricultural Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Earlibelle (tested as NC 2486) originated from a cross of Albritton x Md-US 2101 made in 1954, and first selected at Willard, North Carolina in 1956.

Berries of Earlibelle are medium-large in size, have a very glossy surface, and a bright red uniform color that is retained for several hours after harvest. Berries have a symmetrical long-conic shape and an attractive

medium-sized calyx. Flavor is tart, with good dessert quality, and the flesh is very firm.

Plants of Earlibelle are relatively small, but vigorous and produce runners very freely. Plants are susceptible to red stele root rot and to verticillium wilt and should **not** be planted on soils suspected of being infected with these diseases. The leaves are resistant to leaf spot and leaf scorch and are fairly tolerant to mildew. Plants have been productive in narrow matted rows in eastern North Carolina and southward to Georgia. The most extensive testing has been done in North Carolina (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of Earlibelle (NC 2486) with Albritton in matted row culture (10% or better difference considered significant)

	Willard Station 1959-63				1964 Season (6 locations) ¹			
	Number seasons*	Al-britton	Earli-belle	% Diff.	Locations Number	Al-britton	Earli-belle	% Diff.
Season (% crop harvested early)	5	44	64	+20	6	36	48	+12
Early Yield (qts/acre)	5	2559	4665	+82	6	1791	3170	+77
Total Yield (qts/acre)	5	5817	7289	+25	6	4782	6090	+27
Marketable Yield (qts/acre)	—	—	—	—	4	3677	3980	+ 8
Weighted Mean Size (# berries/½ lb.)	5	33	31	+ 6	6	37	42	-14
% Small Fruit	3	20	18	+ 2	6	37	51	-14
% Size Variation	2	104	133	-29	5	54	74	-20

*Horticulturists, North Carolina State, Raleigh, N. C., and Crops Research Division, ARS, USDA, Beltsville, Md., respectively.

	Willard Station 1959-63				1964 Season (6 locations) ¹			
	Number seasons	Al-britton	Earli-belle	% Diff.	Number Locations	Al-britton	Earli-belle	% Diff.
<i>Mean Scores²:</i>								
Fruit Appearance	5	7.0	7.1	+ 1	4	7.6	7.5	- 1
Fruit Firmness	5	7.3	8.1	+11	4	6.9	8.0	+16
Fruit Flavor	5	7.0	6.7	- 4	3	7.5	7.3	- 3
Skin Color	5	7.5	7.9	+ 5	2	7.9	8.0	+ 1
Flesh Color	5	6.8	7.7	+13	2	7.2	8.1	+13
Fruit Symmetry	2	8.2	7.8	- 5	2	8.4	8.2	- 2
Skin Toughness	2	7.1	7.6	+ 7	2	6.9	7.5	+ 9
Plant Stand	4	6.8	8.7	+28	5	7.7	9.4	+22
Plant Vigor	4	7.1	8.4	+18	5	8.3	9.0	+ 8
Powdery Mildew	—	sl. susc.	resist.	—	4	7.3	9.3	+27
Field Evaluation ³	2	3.0	3.0	± 0	3	3.1	3.3	+ 6

¹In 1964, a severe spring freeze on March 30, plus dry weather during the ripening season, reduced fruit size, yield, and the seasonal spread of harvest. Early maturing selections, like Earlibelle, were damaged more than later selections like Albritton.

²Scale for individual readings of plant and fruit traits: 10—excellent, 9—very good, 8—superior, 7—good, 6—fair—acceptable, 5—fair—not acceptable, 4—poor, 3—inferior, 2—very poor, 1—poorest.

³Scale used for individual field evaluation readings: 5—introduce, 4—outstanding, 3—promising, 2—mediocre, 1—poor, 0—discard.

Earlibelle ripens about with Dixie-land, and earlier than Albritton in North Carolina. The earliest blooms are subject to frost damage in some seasons.

Earlibelle, with its disease resistant leaves and its early, firm, glossy fruit, is recommended for trial in south-eastern United States as a fresh market variety.

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A Supplement to the 1964 "Plant Patents" is now available. It may be obtained by sending 50¢ to American Assoc. of Nurserymen, 835 Southern Building, Washington, D. C. 20005.

Fred W. Anderson, Fruit Breeder

In their May, 1965 issue, the editors of The Blue Anchor payed tribute to Fred W. Anderson, of La Gande, Cal., who has been breeding fruits for some 35 years. Although he has been most successful with nectarines, and is best known for having introduced the Le Grand nectarine in 1942, he also has patents for almond, cherry, plum and apricot varieties. He has been mainly concerned with development of varieties for the San Joaquin Valley.

Mr. Anderson, a native Californian, is a graduate of University of California in Pomology and Plant Genetics. He began his breeding career in Merced, Calif., and is still actively managing a 30 acre experimental planting at the age of 72. He is currently developing dwarf nectarine varieties.