

Reid M. Brooks' Evaluation of Sweet Cherries for Home Garden and Dessert Use

ROBERT A. NITSCHKE*

The tribute in the April, 1966 issue of the Digest to the late Dr. Reid M. Brooks, Professor and Pomologist of the University of California, described his lifetime of work with fruit varieties, especially his research and breeding of sweet cherries. Dr. Brooks also had a keen interest in cherry varieties from the standpoint of the connoisseur and home gardener. He frequently and generously shared his knowledge and enthusiasm with members of the Fruit Gardens Committee.

Shortly prior to his death, Dr. Brooks had agreed to write an article for the Fruit Var. and Hort. Digest on cherries for the home garden and dessert use based on an appraisal which he had made for the author several years ago of the sweet cherry varieties growing in the extensive collection of the Department of Pomology, University of California, Davis.

Since we can never have the article, I am certain that it would be a contribution to the literature on cherries to publish the notes made for this appraisal of the cherry variety inventory at Davis, and I know Dr. Brooks would have approved this information.

In his notes, Dr. Brooks starred the varieties he recommended for dessert and the home garden and double-starred those he recommended the most highly. Several others were commented upon for their value or lack of value, or were referred for descriptions to the Brooks and Olmo *Register of New Fruit and Nut Varieties*, 1920-1950 with annual supplements.

I will list all varieties for which Dr. Brooks made comments in these three groups. It should be noted that Dr. Brooks emphasized that his notations applied to California conditions, that varieties might act differently in Michigan or elsewhere, that he had no information on hardiness since it was not a problem at Davis, and that the names were spelled as received at Davis, although some were thought to be misspelled.

Highly Recommended

Fruhe Schwarze Altenlander—Black. Flavor good. Good for home garden.

Lambert—Still the top variety.

Parkhill—Purplish flesh. Soft. Excellent flavor. Tops in quality. Certainly recommended for home gardens!

Spate Braune — Deep red. Large. Sweet plus some acid. Firm. Very promising!

Sparkling Hardy Giant—Black. Large. Firm. Very promising.

Recommended

Bigarreau de Schrecken—Very good black. Promising.

Bigarreau de St. Charmez — Large. Firm. Very good.

Bing—Still a top variety.

Black Russian—Very promising black. *Bradbourne Black* — Prominent in England. Sweet. Excellent.

Bush Tartarian — Semi-dwarf tree. Fruit good. Promising for you, perhaps.

Buttner's Spate Rote—White. Considered one of the better German varieties.

*Chairman, Fruit Gardens Committee, Birmingham, Michigan.

Hatif Burlat—Black. Large. Early. Very good.

Hedelfingen—Black. Firm.

Precoce de Beaulieu—Black. Large! Early! Promising!

Reverchon—Black. Large. Promising.

Schwartze Herz—Black. Very firm. Tree spreading. Looks very promising.

Schneider's Spate Knorpelkirsche — Light red. Large. Very good.

Van—Black. Stem short. Ripens here with Bing. Pollinates Bing and Napoleon.

Other Varieties

A-10 — White, similar to Napoleon; pollinates it.

Badacsoner Riesenkirche—Black, firm sweet.

Badeborner Schwarze Knorpelkirsche —Black, firm, large. Looks promising.

Bassford—No good.

Bedford Prolific—No good.

Belle d'Annonay—Dark red.

Belle d'Orleans—White, soft flesh.

Bopparder Kracker — White. Sets heavily.

Braunauer — Large but soft. Yields heavily.

Britson—Local variety. No good.

Burbank—No good.

Burr's Seedling—No good.

Buttner's Rote Knorpelkirsche—White. Very sweet.

Chrzgetha Kozerska — Firm. Sweet.

Pit small. Flavor fine. Bing type. Tree spreading.

Coeur de Pigeon—White. Large. Soft to firm. Sweet.

Coops Special—Does not crack; but no flavor.

Donnissen's Gelbe Knorpelkirsche — Yellow. Very firm.

Durona del Anella—Black. Very firm.

Ebony—Described in Register.

Farnstadter Schwarze — Black, very firm. Skin tough.

Flamentiner—White.

Fruhe Mai—Skin purple. Very early.

Gil Peck—From New York. Has not done well in California.

Guigne Gardine — Dark flesh, soft, good.

Hative de Bale — Very early. Soft. Black.

Honey Heart—Soft.

Inglese Precoce—Dark red. Soft.

Kanarkowa—Skin yellow, no blush. Similar to Saylor.

Kentish Bigarreau—White, blushed.

Konigskirsche—White, firm.

La Cima—Soft. (Is a good parent.)

Luizet—Deep red, firm. Quality fair.

Lyons—A weeping tree!

Mazzard F12/1 (English rootstock)—Resistant to bacterial canker.

Mott—Local variety. No good. Black.

Napa Long Stem Bing—Black. Local variety from Napa County.

Nutter Crackless—Local variety. No good. Black.

Oliver Early Bing — Local variety. Fair. Black.

Oliver Long Stem Bing—Local variety. Black. Very good.

Peerless—Dark red. From Montana.

Pocock—Local variety. No good.

Gorter—No Good.

Precoce de Clies—Black. Large. Early. Flavor fair. Soft, sweet.

Sam—Described in Register.

Sanguinette—Described in Register. Local variety. Similar to Black Tartarian.

Saylor—Pure yellow.

Sciutti Tartarian—Local. Has crinkle leaf. No good.

Seneca — New York variety. Very early. Never caught on in California.

Sharpe—No good.

Shelton—No good.

Sodus—New York variety, but never caught on in California.

Sparkle—Described in Register.

Star—Described in Register.

Sue—Described in Register.

Ursula Rivers—Black. Tree spreading.

Vernon—Red. Medium firm. With Bing.

Walkers Early Bing—No good.

Werdersche Marktkirsche—(probably Werdersche Mai.) Black. Firm. Good.

Zeisberger Reisenkirsche—White.

A comment should perhaps be added with respect to the outstanding performance of Spate Braune (Late Brown) in the author's garden in Southeastern Michigan. This variety

has proven to be prolific in bearing, very large to large in size, with crisp, solid, juicy red flesh of fine flavor that crunches to the bite, and with a beautiful mirror-like dark red skin that has been as crack-resistant as any in my collection. I rated it best among this season's cherry varieties. Spate Braune is a local variety from the Rhineland foothills and was obtained from the Christian Fey Nurseries near Bonn, Germany.

Who Wants the White Carolina Strawberry?

GEORGE M. DARROW*

Of considerable interest, historic, if not economic, is the White Carolina strawberry, a parent of Keens Imperial, which in turn was a parent of Keens Seedling, which originated in 1819, and was the first modern strawberry. This White Carolina, if true to name, is apparently different from the original first known cultivated hybrid strawberry, the Old Pine (Carolina), described and figured by Miller in 1759 in England. Old Pine is described as bright scarlet with light red flesh, while the White Carolina that I am growing is pink tinted with white flesh. Old Pine was described as making few runners, while White Carolina makes many runners for me at Glenn Dale.

The White Carolina that I have came to me through the courtesy of Henry Wallace and Dr. S. C. Harland. The latter, formerly Professor of Botany at the University of Manchester, England, had heard that it was being grown in the garden of A. B. Mortimer, Meath, Ireland, whose great-grandmother had grown the variety. He personally obtained plants from

Ireland and had them propagated by Frank Spinks. Both Mr. Spinks and Dr. Harland's brother retained some plants in England. Plants were received from Mr. Spinks in 1964 by the U. S. Plant Quarantine Station, and runner plants were released to me in 1965. They have made runners freely, and have borne a few small, pink-tinted berries, spring frost having killed most of the flowers. The foliage is glossy green and thick in cool weather, but dull green in the hot dry summer. It is quite susceptible to a leaf spot similar to *Dendrophoma*.

I have a few plants for those interested. It is probably not hardy, is frost susceptible; the fruit is very soft, and tinted pink-lavender. But it is the earliest ancestor of the cultivated strawberry of which we know. For those who wish to use it in breeding for the north-eastern United States, I would suggest using a hardy *F. virginiana* or *F. ovalis* selection, and then crossing the best resulting seedling with some hardy cultivated variety.

*Consultant with U.S.D.A., of Glenn Dale, Maryland.