

A Report from the Balsgard Breeding Institute

NILS NYBOM*

The Balsgard Fruit Breeding Institute is releasing the following three new varieties this year: The summer apple, Katja; a very early plum, Gilbert; and the very early-ripening and grey mold-resistant strawberry, Kristina.

The apple, Katja, ripens with one of its parents, James Grieve. From its other parent, Worcester Permain, it gets its mildew resistance. The fruit of Katja is a very attractive red, has a very firm flesh, and good handling and shipping quality. It should make a good commercial apple.

The plum, Gilbert, most closely resembles one parent, Ruth Gerstetter, and we hope it will be the earliest plum on the market. It has much better dessert quality and makes a healthier tree than Ruth Gerstetter. Its other parent is Ontario.

The strawberry, Kristina, is a cross between Senga Sengana, which it

closely resembles with regard to both plant and fruit, and Valentine, from which it has inherited extreme earliness and resistance to Botrytis. The berries are firm enough to handle and ship quite well.

A very interesting "departure" is represented by the Vescana strawberry hybrids being developed by our breeder, Mrs. Annelise Bauer and her husband, Dr. Rudolph Bauer, of the Max Planck Institute, of Cologne, Germany. Figure 1, shows the Bauers amidst the Vescana material. The Vescanas are decaploid hybrids of ordinary strawberries and *Fragaria vesca*. They have very erect fruit clusters, which seem to be well suited for mechanical harvesting. They are "self-hulling" (the calyx remains on the plant), and the relatively few berries per inflorescence, ripen relatively evenly. So far, these hybrids are still under development, and there is as yet no material ready for distribution.



Fig. 1. Mrs. Annelise Bauer and her husband, Dr. Rudolph Bauer, among their Vescana strawberry hybrids.

English Exhibit of Old Varieties

Muriel Smith, of National Fruit Trials, Brogdale, England tells (Exp. Hort. 17, 1967) of a 1965 apple exhibit of the Royal Society, consisting of varieties that existed in the 1660's or earlier. Among them were the 'Cotard', listed among the purchases of the King in 1292; and 'Flower of Kent', known to come from a tree belonging to Sir Isaac Newton. Interestingly enough, specimens of the dainty 'Lady Apple', once found in Louis XIII's gardens in 1628, were provided for the exhibit by R. A. Nitschke, chairman of the APS Fruit Gardens Committee.

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