

The Redchief Strawberry

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The Agricultural Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station recently announced the naming and release, for propagation, of a new variety of strawberry, developed through the joint effort of small fruit breeders of those institutions. Known as Redchief, this new variety was tested as Md-US 3609. It was selected for propagation and further testing in 1960 by I. C. Haut, of the Maryland Station, and D. H. Scott, of the U. S. D. A.

Plants were received by the Department of Horticulture of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1964 for testing in its experimental plots.

Redchief has had three years of fruiting at Blacksburg. In 1965, it ranked third in production of berries among the 41 varieties and selections under observation. Only Earlidawn and Surecrop, both recommended for planting in Virginia, outyielded Redchief. In 1966, the first wave of blossoms and green berries of all varieties were destroyed by freezes on May 10 and 11. A few varieties, namely Empire, Pocohontas, and Sparkle, produced a second wave of blossoms and about half of a crop of berries; but Redchief produced only a few berries.

In 1967, the Redchief plot produced 28 quarts of berries, and was outyielded only by Catskill and Armore plots, with 39 and 32 quarts respectively.

Redchief was selected for introduction because of its resistance to five

races of red stele, and its intermediate resistance to verticillium wilt. These diseases were not present in any of the V. P. I. plots, so that no information is available on the response of Redchief to those diseases in Blacksburg. No evidence was noted of leaf scorch and mildew on the foliage, but leaf spot was moderately severe. Redchief was found to perform well under the matted row system.

Redchief ripens in late-midseason, a day or two after Catskill and Surecrop. The berries are of medium size, have a firm, glossy skin, firm flesh, uniform deep red color, subacid flavor, and good dessert quality.

Plants of Redchief were available to growers in the Fall of 1968 for the first time. It appears worthy of testing in at least the mountain areas of Virginia, and may be especially useful on less well drained soils where red stele may be a serious problem.

L. Fredric Hough Wins Citation

The New Jersey State Horticultural Society presented an Award of Achievement at its annual meeting, Jan. 9, 1968, to Dr. L. Fredric Hough, of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (a current Vice-President of A. P. S.), for his many contributions as a fruit breeder and teacher. The citation reads partly as follows: "You (Dr. Hough), through your twenty years of assiduous application of recognized principles of plant breeding have, from more than two hundred thousand seedlings, produced numerous new varieties of peaches, nectarines, apples, pears, and strawberries."

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