Sweet Cherry Cultivar Trial

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Recommended Citation
Hannan, Joseph M., "Sweet Cherry Cultivar Trial" (2011). Iowa State Research Farm Progress Reports. 220.
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Abstract
In 2009, a sweet cherry tree cultivar trial was established to evaluate the suitability of new varieties for the home gardener in the Muscatine Island region. Seven varieties grafted onto Gisela® 5 rootstocks were planted in spring 2009. Gisela® 5 rootstock was chosen for its dwarfing ability (roughly 50 percent of Mazzard), virus resistance, and cold hardiness.

Keywords
RFR A1010

Disciplines
Agricultural Science | Agriculture | Fruit Science
Sweet Cherry Cultivar Trial

RFR-A1010

Joseph Hannan, ag specialist

Introduction
In 2009, a sweet cherry tree cultivar trial was established to evaluate the suitability of new varieties for the home gardener in the Muscatine Island region. Seven varieties grafted onto Gisela® 5 rootstocks were planted in spring 2009. Gisela® 5 rootstock was chosen for its dwarfing ability (roughly 50 percent of Mazzard), virus resistance, and cold hardiness.

Materials and Methods
Plot arrangement was a randomized complete block design with three replications, one tree per replication. Trees were planted in a coarse, sandy soil 7 ft apart in a single row and pruned to a central leader.

Water was applied via a low pressure spray system over the diameter of the root zone as needed. Urea was applied at the rate of 0.1 lb actual N per inch of trunk diameter per tree per year where trunk diameter is determined by the average of all trunk diameters measured 12 in. above the soil surface. Due to the leach potential on the coarse sandy soil, fertilizer was applied in three equal applications over six weeks.

Japanese beetles were controlled with Sevin XLR as needed. Weeds were controlled through periodic mowing of a bluegrass cover. Leaf spot was controlled with a rotation of Captan, Bravo, and Pristine.

Results and Discussion
Late spring frosts on April 8, 9, and 17 recorded low temperatures of 32.6, 26.5, and 34°F, respectively, but did not injure emerging or burst buds. Trees were not yet fruiting so no flower bud injury was recorded. Cherry leaf spot was common due to the unusually wet season and caused premature leaf defoliation in 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>2010 trunk caliper growth (in.)</th>
<th>2010 trunk caliper % increase</th>
<th>Cherry leaf spot susceptibility</th>
<th>Bud burst (Julien date)</th>
<th>GDDz to bud burst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rainier</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>123.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackgold</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>220.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>NY38L</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>150.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweetheart</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>140.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristin</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>167.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>NY32L</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>150.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ulster</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>172.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LSD, P < .05 0.17 1.2 2.3

*a*Measured 12 in. above soil surface.

*b*Cherry leaf spot scale 1–4: 1 = not susceptible; 2 = somewhat susceptible; 3 = susceptible, 4 = very susceptible.

*y*Julian date; 93 = April 2, 2010.

*z*Growing degree days; Base 50 Cap 86 accumulated from January 1, 2010.