

Project No.: 13K-3455-5218

Title: Alternate Crops: Growing Cherries on Dwarfing Rootstocks for Niche Markets

Reporting Period: 1998

Personnel:

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Accomplishments

Interest has developed in late cherries as a niche market commercial crop for western Washington growers. The new dwarfing Gisela rootstocks show potential, since these new rootstocks produce trees that are about 50% smaller than trees on rootstocks in common commercial use. This makes possible the growing of trees under net to protect from bird damage, and allows for easier harvesting without the use of ladders. Also, sheet plastic could be spread over the net frame to prevent cracking due to rain, as is done in Europe. Intensive cropping has the potential for higher returns per unit area of orchard as well. The Western Washington Tree Fruit Research Foundation, a group of small growers and home gardeners, The Western Washington Tree Fruit Research Foundation, a group of small growers and home gardeners, put \$15,200 into variety trials in 1998. They have been, and continue to be a good partner for us in new crop identification, and is working with NARF in partnership on this project.

A test planting of promising cherries, on different Gisela rootstocks, has been established and the trees producing fruit in 1998 were netted so that preliminary data could be collected with respect to fruit yields, quality, cracking, maturity, etc.

Results

Trees of the late sweet cherry varieties Lapins and Sweetheart, planted in 1996 on Gisela 5 (148-8) rootstock, produced sufficient quantities of fruit for data collection and study. Pickers harvested all fruit, which were then sorted into good fruit, cracked, and rot. Weights were recorded, and the weight of 25 average fruits recorded for size comparison. Results are shown in the appendix as Table 1.

Publications

None.

Appendix

Table 1. Harvest of 'Lapins' and 'Sweetheart' cherry, July 16, 1998 (weights recorded in grams).

Cv/ Tree #	Total Fruit	Good	Crack	Rot	Wt. 25 Fruit	Avg.
Lapins	7086	5028	1458	600	218	8.72
Lapins	6570	3204	2722	644	256	10.24
Lapins	7332	5298	1604	430	238	9.52
Lapins	7864	3664	2712	1488	282	11.28
Lapins	8038	4330	2502	1206	284	11.36
Total	36,890	21,524	10,998	4368		10.22
Sweetheart	3032	1754	1248	30	222	8.88
Sweetheart	2932	912	1814	206	244	9.76
Sweetheart	1476	988	424	64	230	9.20
Sweetheart	3210	1864	1176	170	254	10.16
Total	10,650	5518	4662	470		9.50

Fruit of Lapins showed 30% cracked and 12% rotted fruit; Sweetheart had 48% cracked and 4% rotted fruit. "Good fruit" included only those fruits with no blemish, "cracked" included all fruit with any skin cracking, and "rot" consisted of rotted fruit from whatever cause, i.e. rain cracks, fruit clumped together, etc.