Strawberry Variety Trials in Maine

Results and Recommendations
What Makes a Good Strawberry Variety?

• Yield
• Harvest season
• Fruit quality
  • Size
  • Color
  • Firmness
  • Flavor
• Durability
  • Winter hardiness
  • Disease resistance
• Longevity
• Customer Appeal
Strawberry Variety Trial 2003-05

Highmoor Farm, Monmouth, Maine

• Matted Row

• Planted 2003, flowers removed

• Plants 12” apart, 4’ between rows

• Rows trained to 18” wide

• Mulched for winter

• Harvested 2004, 2005

• Note: cold, open winters ’03,’04
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<th>Kg/Plot</th>
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Strawberry Variety Trial 2006-09

Highmoor Farm, Monmouth, Maine

• Narrow matted row, raised beds
• Trickle irrigation
• Planted 2006, flowers removed
• Plants 12” apart, 4.5’ between rows
• Rows trained to 18” wide
• Mulched for winter
• Harvest 2007-2009
• Note: flooding in springs of ’06, ‘08
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Strawberry Variety Trial

Mesabi

- Mid-season
- Highest yielding
- Fair fruit size
- Good appearance
  - Firm, glossy
- Difficult to pick
  - Hidden, hard pulling
Strawberry Variety Trial

Sable

- Early season
- High yielding
  - Rank: 2nd
- Fair-good fruit size
- Good appearance
- Fair cull rate (size)
- Good flavor
Strawberry Variety Trial

👍 Wendy

• Early season
• High yielding
  – Rank: 6th
• Fair-good fruit size
• Very nice appearance
• Low cull rate
• Good flavor
  – Sweet, lacks acid
Strawberry Variety Trial

Mira

- Mid-late season
- High yielding
  - Rank: 4th
- Good fruit size
- Good appearance
  - Light color
- Low cull rate
- Good flavor
Strawberry Variety Trial

Itsaca

- Mid-early season
- High yielding first year
  - Two year rank: 13th
- Fair-good fruit size
- Good color (dull?)
- Slightly soft
- High cull rate (size, rot)
- Bland, slightly acid flavor
- 2nd season disaster
Strawberry Variety Trial

👍 Cabot

- Late mid-season
- Good yields
  - Rank: 8th
- Very large fruit
- Rough appearance
  - Nice color, stem & calyx
- Fair cull rate
  - Rot, splits, misshapen
- Good flavor, soft
- Large plant
  - Supplemental N
Strawberry Variety Trial

**Brunswick**
- Early mid-season
- High yielding  
  - Rank: 7th
- Good fruit size
- Good appearance  
  - May be dark, soft
- Few culls
- Flavor issues?
- Renovate lightly
Strawberry Variety Trial

Darselect

- Mid-season
- Good yields
  - Rank: 10\textsuperscript{th}
- Nice appearance
  - Uniform, fancy calyx
- Fairly high cull rate
  - Rot, size, misshapen
- Good flavor, firmness
- Large, floppy leaves
  - Very susceptible to scorch
- Winter tender?
Strawberry Variety Recommendations 2009

• Early
  – Sable, Wendy, Annapolis, Honeoye

• Early Mid-season
  – Brunswick, Cavendish, Itasca?

• Mid-Season
  – Jewel, Mesabi, Mira, Darselect

• Late
  – Cabot, Allstar, Clancy, Ovation?, Yamaska?
Day-Neutral Variety Observations 2006

- Planted spring 5/15-22/2006
  - David Pike, Farmington, ME
- Raised beds, plastic mulch
- 13,400 plants/acre
  - 13” in-row, 2’ between rows
- Cost for 1/10 acre = $2,000
- Return = $3,500 (Wholesale)
  - 840 qts. (~$4/qts.)
Day-Neutral Variety Observations
2006

- Evie-2 (UK)
  - Early (start 8/1, peak 8/20)
  - High yields (13,030 qts./acre)
  - Good size, uniform, light color
  - Very soft, high cull %
  - Overall quality: Fair

Photo: Nourse Farms
Day-Neutral Variety Observations 2006

- **Seascape (CA)**
  - Mid-late (peak 9/16)
  - Large plants
  - Use wider spacing?
  - High yields (13,700 qts./acre)
  - Good size, nice appearance
  - Firm, good flavor
  - Overall quality: very good
Day-Neutral Variety Observations 2006

• Albion (CA)
  – Late (peak 9/16)
    • Many plants didn’t produce till late
  – Lowest yields (5,750 qts./acre)
  – Good size, very nice appearance
  – Firm, good flavor
  – Overall quality: good
  – Note: still producing well at end of season

Photo: D. Pike
Strawberry Variety Trials

• Test them yourself!
• Always trial new varieties in small plantings (reduce risk)
• Plant new varieties next to a standard for your area
• Observe for at least two harvest seasons before “buying in”
• Get customer feedback