

Varieties - Tried and True/New and Promising

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One of the most critical aspects of establishing a healthy berry planting, along with proper site planning, is obtaining high quality planting stock that has a vigorous root system and is free from disease and insect pests. The plants should be obtained from a reputable nursery that participates in a certification program to ensure plants are free from diseases such as viruses and root rots. Plants should be ordered well in advance of planting to ensure an adequate supply of the desired varieties.

Strawberries are one of the most variable and temperamental of the fruit crops and the choice of varieties is extensive because individual varieties are often adapted to a relatively small growing region. The most commonly grown varieties in the northeastern U.S. are short-day (June-bearing) types and new varieties are constantly being developed. Newer day-neutral varieties are gaining popularity for potential offseason production in plasticulture systems. Most varieties have some weaknesses so growers are advised to try new ones on a limited scale to determine how they will perform in each situation.

Variety Descriptions

Early Season

AC Wendy (Nova Scotia) produces large blocky/conic fruit with good quality and flavor and higher yields than most early season varieties. Ripening tends to be uneven leaving white tips and/or shoulders especially when temperatures are high. Establishment of new plantings has been uneven. It is susceptible to leaf spot late in the season.

Annapolis (Nova Scotia) is a large fruited early season variety. The fruit is pale red and soft with good flavor and can have high yield. It is susceptible to powdery mildew and *Verticillium* wilt.

Daroyal (France/Spain) produces large, wedge to conic shaped dark red fruit with dark red flesh in the Honeoye season. The plants are vigorous and establish well.

Earliglow (USDA, MD) is still considered the best tasting berry around. Primary berries are large and attractive and are suitable for retail or wholesale. Berry weight drops off quickly after the primary berries and yields are relatively low. It is susceptible to powdery mildew after harvest.

Honeoye (Cornell University, NY) produces an abundance of large, attractive, firm, berries that are suitable for all markets. Closer to an early mid-season, the look of this berry sells it, but taste is the major drawback as it can be tart and can develop disagreeable aftertastes when over ripe or in heavy soils. It is susceptible to red stele disease but is manageable.

L'Amour (Cornell) produces very attractive heart shaped berries with bright red color. The fruit has a very good, aromatic flavor with good eating quality. The plants are vigorous and disease resistant and remain productive for many years. The fruit is larger than most early season varieties.

Mid Season

Chandler (University of California) is a standard southern variety grown for wholesale markets in plasticulture with high yields in the Carolinas. It can have problems north of the mid-Atlantic region due to lack of strong winter hardiness. Chandler is also susceptible to anthracnose fruit rot.

Darselect (France) is a large fruited, high yielding variety. The berries are attractive and bright red with a long conical shape. The flavor is very good. However, it tends to be soft. It is susceptible to powdery mildew, which can be a problem in areas with morning fog.

Jewel (Cornell University, NY) continues to be the favorite in the northeast for this season. The high quality berries are large and attractive with good flavor. Yields are moderate to high. On a good site, it's hard to beat. It is susceptible to red stele and can have vigor problems in poor or cold sites.

Late Season

AC Valley Sunset (Nova Scotia) produces large conic fruit into the late season. The conic fruit tends to be a bit rough in shape but still attractive. As with all late season varieties, tarnished plant bug can become a problem and extra care at renovation is warranted.

Allstar (USDA, MD) is good yielding, high quality variety with good flavor. Unfortunately, the color is pale to orangish and is can be unacceptable to an uninformed consumer.

Cabot (Nova Scotia) produces impressive berries. Average fruit weight is larger than any variety currently available. Primary berries oftentop 40g. The color can be pale throughout the berry and primary berries are often irregular in shape. Yields are very high. It is resistant to red stele but is susceptible to virus infection and cyclamen mites.

Clancy (Cornell University, NY) produces round conical shaped fruit with darker red color and good flavor. The flesh is very firm with good texture and eating quality. The fruiting laterals are strong and stiff, keeping the fruit off the ground until they reach full size. It is resistant to red stele root rot.

Donna (France/Spain) produces medium large fruit that is very uniform. The fruit is darker than Darselect with similar quality but somewhat soft. The flavor can be bland.

Ovation (USDA, MD) is extremely late. It doesn't flower until after most others are past their peak bloom. The plant is extremely vigorous and produces multiple crowns. Fruit quality is average but there is little to compare it to in its season. Yields are moderate.

Record (Italy) produces large fruit in the late season with good yields reported. The color is darker than Idea, which it replaced, but is still considered light to slightly orange, similar to Allstar.

Seneca (Cornell University, NY) is probably the firmest short-day variety available for the east. The fruit is large, blocky and bright red with a strong flavor. It does not runner heavily and can be adapted to plasticulture.

Winona (University of Minnesota) has very large berries and average yields but can not compete with Jewel for fruit appearance. It has good vigor though and might be useful where Jewel does poorly.

Day Neutral

Albion (University of California-Davis) produces long conic shaped berries with good flavor and large size. The color is bright red with little interior color. It can produce a good second crop in late summer and into the fall, especially with low or high tunnels are used to protect the plants. It is very susceptible to fruit, leaf and root diseases.

Evie 2 (U.K.) produces medium large beet-shaped fruit that are bright red with a pale interior. Fruit production in the summer is high but in the fall has been moderate. It is very susceptible to fruit, leaf and root diseases.

Monterey (University of California-Davis) produces large attractive berries with a bright red color. The fruit is extremely firm, typical of many UC varieties with a large calyx. It produces a good second crop by late July and into the fall, especially with low or high tunnels are used to protect the plants. It is very susceptible to fruit, leaf and root diseases.

San Andreas (University of California-Davis) produces large attractive berries with a bright red color. The fruit is moderately firm with a good texture. It tends to cap easily if not picked carefully. It can produce a good second crop in late summer and into the fall, especially with low or high tunnels to protect the plants. It is very susceptible to fruit, leaf and root diseases.

Seascape (University of California) produces large, attractive darker red fruit. It is moderately firm with good flavor. It can produce a good second crop in late summer and into the fall, especially with low or high tunnels to protect the plants. It is susceptible to fruit, leaf and root diseases but less so than other UC varieties.

Tribute and **Tristar** (USDA, MD) have been the standard day neutral varieties for the northeast for the last 20 years. They are disease resistant, vigorous, and runner enough for matted row production. Both are relatively small fruited and low yielding but off-season fruit may pay off. Of the two, Tribute has better size and Tristar has better flavor.