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[54] **STRAWBERRY PLANT SHARON**

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[73] Assignee: **State of Israel, Ministry of Agriculture, The Volcani Center**, Bet Dagan, Israel

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Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation of Ser. No. 490,103, Mar. 6, 1990, abandoned.

[51] **Int. Cl.**[5] **A01H 5/00**
[52] **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./48**
[58] **Field of Search** Plt./48, 49

[56] **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

P.P. 4,487	11/1979	Bringhurst et al.	Plt. 49
P.P. 5,262	7/1984	Voth et al.	Plt. 48
P.P. 5,263	7/1984	Voth et al.	Plt. 48
P.P. 5,264	7/1984	Bringhurst et al.	Plt. 48
P.P. 5,268	8/1984	Voth et al.	Plt. 48
P.P. 6,578	1/1989	Voth et al.	Plt. 48
P.P. 7,024	9/1989	Johnson et al.	Plt. 49
P.P. 7,172	2/1990	Voth et al.	Plt. 49

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Howard, C. M. and Albregts, E. E., 1980; HortScience 15(4):540.
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct variety of strawberry (Fragaria L.) called "Sharon" is disclosed. The variety is a cross between "Rachel" and "Chandler", which results in a variety that flowers several months earlier than other known and available strawberry varieties.

1 Drawing Sheet

This is a continuation of application Ser. No. 07/490,103, filed Mar. 6, 1990, now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct variety of strawberry (Fragaria L.) called "Sharon". The variety was developed from an organized scientifically designated breeding program carried out at the Agricultural Research Organization, the Volcani Center, Bet Dagan, Israel. The variety is the product of selection of seedlings resulting from crosses between the strawberry varieties "Rachel" and "Chandler". The variety was asexually vegetatively propagated through runners and the reproduction ran true.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The new variety "Sharon" resembles the variety "Chandler" and is able to grow in September and produce fruit starting in November and lasting until summer. The production of fruit beginning in November is two months earlier than any known variety of Fragaria L. The fruit of the "Sharon" variety is characterized by good taste, good shape and size as well as a long shelf life.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIG. 1 — Photograph of the "Sharon" variety illustrating the foliage and fruit.

FIG. 2 — Photograph of the "Sharon" variety illustrating the fruit.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The "Sharon" variety was grown in winter under polyethylene tunnels in Israel. "Sharon" is a short day variety that flowers earlier than other known and available short day length strawberry varieties. Flowering and fruit production is not affected by the use of polyethylene wind tunnels. This production procedure is utilized in normal agricultural practices by the skilled artisan and does not involve temperature or light control. Mother plants were stored at 0° C. from January through April. They were then planted in the nursery without further treatment. Runners with plantlets were produced during summer. These young plantlets were collected from the nursery in September and transferred to raised beds. Average temperatures at that time of the year are 30° C. during the day and 22° C. at night. Water and fertilizers were applied through drip irrigation. An example of an optimum planting date is between September 15th to the 20th with the approximate date of flowering on October 20, and the approximate date of first fruiting on November 20. "Sharon" flowering is not induced by chilling, but by natural exposure to short day length (long nights) characteristic of late fall and early winter. Color readings described herein were taken under natural light conditions and color identifications were made by reference to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart (RHSCC) except where common terms of color definition are employed.

The pertinent characteristics of the present invention are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. Additionally, the

variety "Sharon" (1) has no tendency toward fruit malformation; (2) disease resistance appears normal in that no particular problematic conditions arose during trials; and (3) the type of bearing is not remonant (e.g., "Sharon" blooms perpetuously, during late fall and winter).

The fruit is longer than broad, with primary, secondary and tertiary fruit possessing distinct shape (Table 2). The fruit is firm to very firm with a dark red color (Table 2). The variety "Sharon" flowers several months earlier than known strawberry varieties. One of the closest known varieties would be "Karina" (Table 1) as well as the new varieties under co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. Nos. 07/735,968 ("Dorit"), 07/735,695 ("Shalom"), 07/435,967 ("Smadar"), and 07/735,970 ("Saaid"). Additionally, early flowering results in early fruit production for "Sharon" and the four co-pending varieties (Table 3). Total Soluble Solids (TSS), percent acidity and aroma are presented in Table 4 by comparison to the varieties listed in Table 3.

TABLE 1

PLANT CHARACTERISTICS OF "SHARON"

MORPHOLOGICAL TRAIT	DESCRIPTION[a]	COMPARABLE VARIETY[b]
Classification	Botanical-Fragaria L.	
Plant habit	Flat	"Pantagruella"
Plant density	Medium	"Gorella"
Plant vigor	Strong	"Grande"
Leaf:		
a) Lebght	14–18 cm	
b) Width	11–13 cm	
c) Color	Green Group 143 A (RHSCC)	
1) Upper Side:	Medium Green	
d) Blistering	Absent or Very Weak	
e) Cross-section	Flat	
f) # of leaflets	Sometimes >3	
Terminal leaflet		
a) Length/Width ratio	As long as broad	
b) Shape of base	Obtuse	
c) Shape of teeth	Rounded	
d) Length	6–7 cm	
e) Width	6–7 cm	
Flower		
a) Size	Medium	"Gorella"
b) Size of calyx to corolla	Same size	
c) Size of inner calyx versus outer calyx	Same size	
d) Spacing of petals	Overlapping	
e) Petal length/width	Broader than long	
f) Time of flowering	Early	"Karina"[c]
Stolon		
a) Number	Medium	"Gorella"
b) Thickness	Thick	
c) Pubescence	Weak	
d) Anthocyanin coloration	Absent or very weak	
Petiole		
a) Pose of hairs	Outwards	
b) Length	7–11 cm	
Inflorescence		
a) Position relative to foliage	Above	

[a]The description of "Sharon" is based on the test guidelines for Fragaria L. of the International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties, (UPOV).
[b]Only characteristics which are relevant for comparing varieties are listed.
[c]"Sharon" flowers at the end of October. One of the earliest known varieties for comparison is "Karina", which flowers in January.

TABLE 2

FRUIT CHARACTERISTICS OF "SHARON"

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Time of ripening	Very Early
Ratio of length/maximum width	Longer than broad
Primary Fruit[a]	Wedged
Length	43–50 mm
Width	30–36 mm
Secondary Fruit	Conical
Length	33–37 mm
Width	27–32 mm
Tertiary Fruit	Ovoid
length	28–30 mm
width	25–26 mm
Size	Large
Band without achenes	Medium
Unevenness of surface	Medium
Color	Red
Evenness of color	Even
Glossiness	Medium
Insertion of achenes	Below surface
Insertion of calyx	Level with surface
Pose of calyx segments	Reflexed
Size of calyx in relation to fruit diameter	Larger
Adherence of calyx	Very strong
Firmness	Firm to Very Firm
Color of Flesh	Red
Evenness of flesh color	Uneven
Sweetness[b]	Weak
Color	44 AB circa (RHSCC)
Taste[b]	Slightly Acidic

[a]There is a marked difference between the shape of the primary, secondary and tertiary fruit.
[b]See Table 4.

TABLE 3

COMPARATIVE YIELD OF "SHARON"[a]

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
Sharon	40	60	80	80	80	80
Dorit[b]	30	70	100	100	100	100
Shalom[c]	50	70	80	100	100	70
Smadar[d]	50	70	100	100	100	50
Saaid[e]	0	70	100	100	100	100
Douglas[f]	0	0	40	150	150	150
Chandler[g]	0	0	30	150	150	120

[a]Average yield in g/m^2 in Ramat Hadar, Isreal (1989–90). The time of ripening for "Sharon" fruit is very early.
[b]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,968. The time of ripening for "Dorit" fruit is early.
[c]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,695. The time of ripening for "Shalom" fruit is early.
[d]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,967. The time of ripening for "Smadar" fruit is very early to early.
[e]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,970. The time of ripening for "Saaid" fruit is early to medium.
[f]U.S. Plant Pat. No. 4,487. The time of ripening for "Douglas" fruit is late.
[g]U.S. Plant Pat. No. 5,262. The time of ripening for "Chandler" fruit is late.

TABLE 4

COMPARATIVE FRUIT CHARACTERISTICS OF "SHARON"

	T.S.S.[a] in %	Acidity[b] in %	Aroma	Taste
Sharon	6.5–7.0	1.0	3	Slightly Acidic
Dorit[c]	8.5–9.5	1.0	5	Good
Shalom[d]	8.0–9.0	1.0	4	Normal
Smadar[e]	8.5–9.5	1.0	5	Good
Saaid[f]	8.0–9.0	1.0	3	Normal
Douglas[g]	6.5–7.0	0.8	3	Slightly Acidic
Chandler[h]	6.5–7.0	0.8	3	Slightly

TABLE 4-continued

COMPARATIVE FRUIT CHARACTERISTICS OF "SHARON"

T.S.S.[a] in %	Acidity[b] in %	Aroma	Taste
			Acidic

[a]Total Soluble Solids expresses fruit sweetness and was determined with a refractometer.
[b]Percent of acidity was determined as follows: 2 cc of juice extract was mixed with 20 cc of water. Five drops of fenolfthaleinen was added and the mixture was titrated with NaOH. The percent acidity is calculated as the quantity of NaOH (cc) × 0.32.
[c]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,968.
[d]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,695.
[e]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,967.
[f]U.S. application Ser. No. 07/735,970.
[g]U.S. Plant Pat. No. 4,487.
[h]U.S. Plant Pat. No. 5,262.

What is claimed is:

1. A new distinct variety of strawberry substantially as illustrated and described and distinguished as being able to grow in September and produce fruit starting in November and lasting until summer, with fruit having a good taste and shape and a long shelf life.

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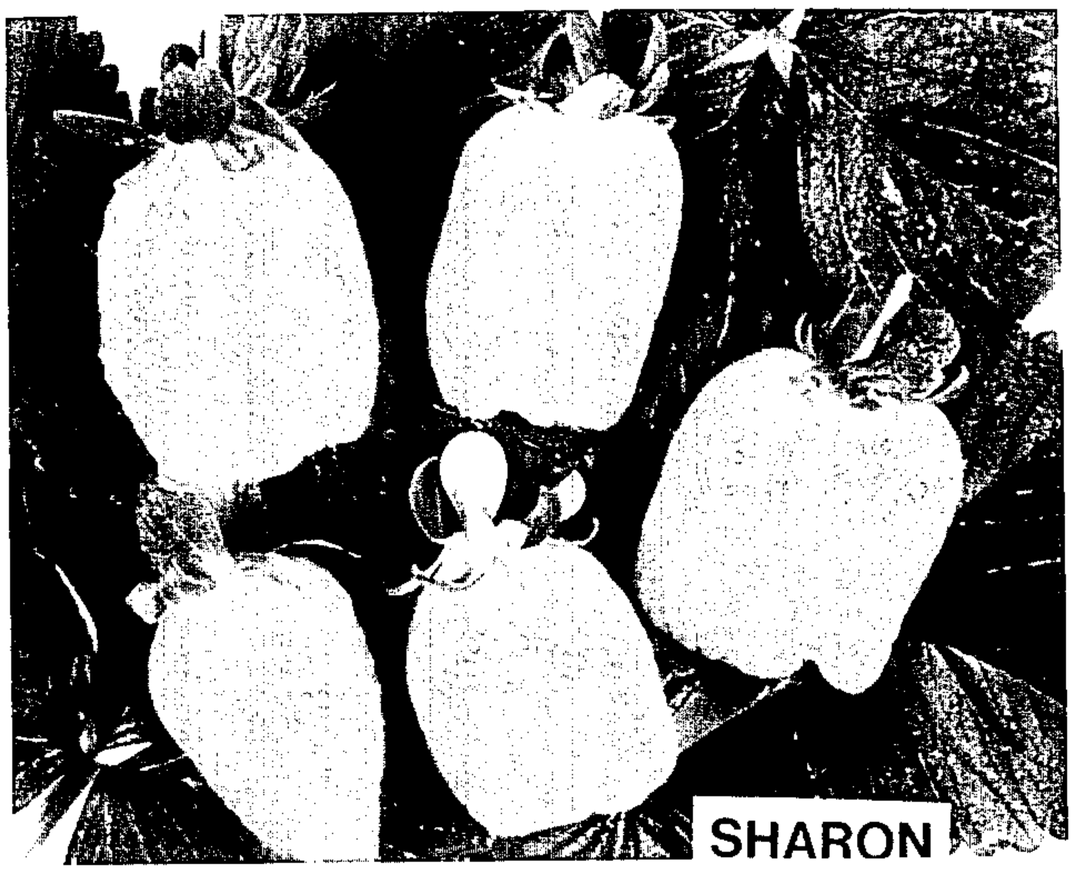

FIG. 1

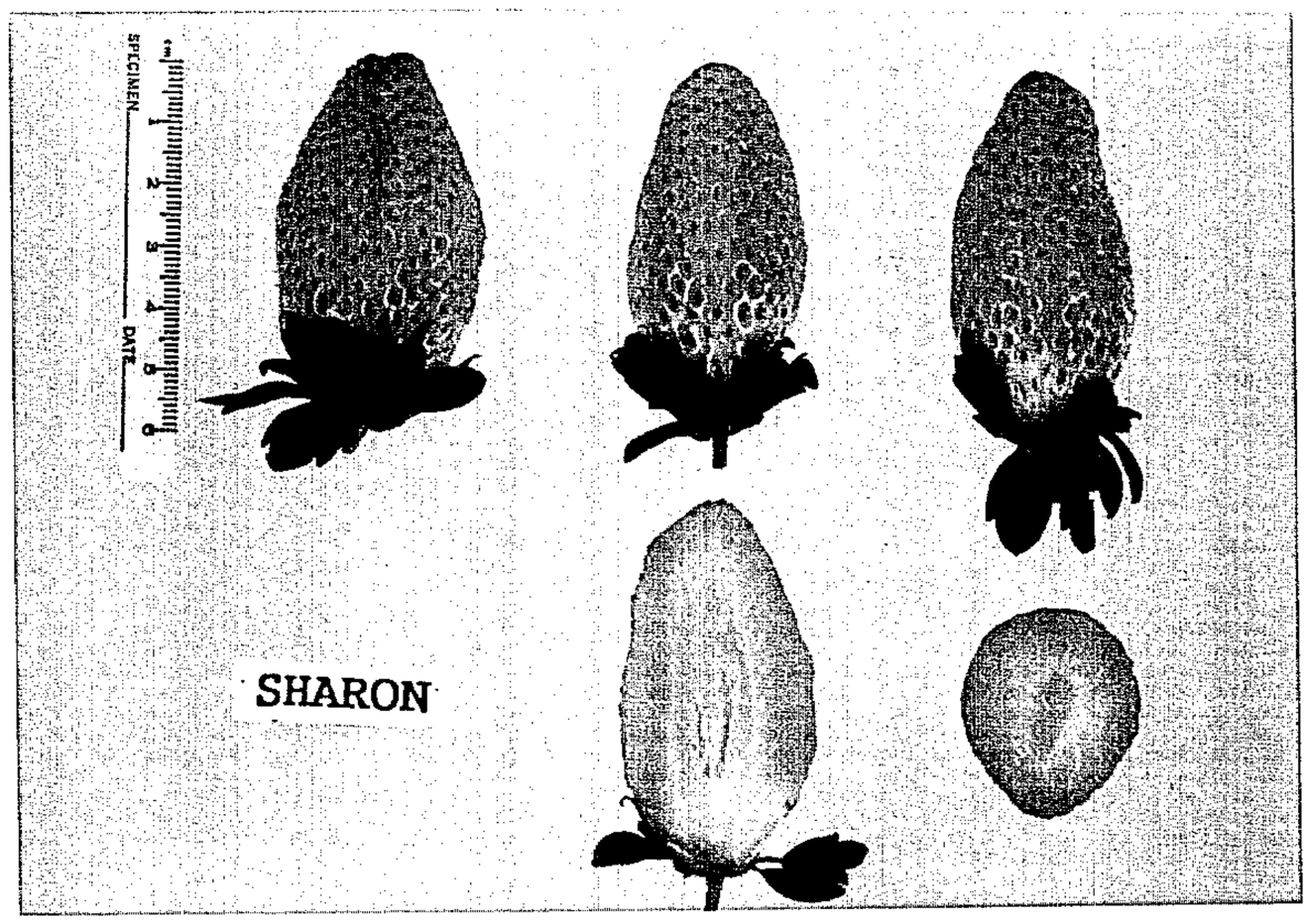

FIG. 2