



US00PP11669P

United States Patent [19]

Beatson et al.

[11] Patent Number: Plant 11,669

[45] Date of Patent: Dec. 5, 2000

[54] APRICOT TREE NAMED 'DUNSTAN'

P.P. 10,233 2/1998 Fear et al. Plt./39

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS

GTITM UPOV ROM Citation for 'Dunstan' as per NZ PBR SFM060, Jul. 14, 1995.

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[21] Appl. No.: 08/892,573

[22] Filed: Jul. 15, 1997

[57] ABSTRACT

[51] Int. Cl.⁷ A01H 5/00

[52] U.S. Cl. Plt./186

[58] Field of Search Plt./39, 186

The present invention relates to a new and improved variety of apricot tree. The fruit of the new variety is characterised by an attractive orange color, medium to large size, and firm flesh with sweet flavor. The tree is characterised by moderately vigorous healthy growth and an upright tree habit. The new variety has been named 'Dunstan'.

[56] References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

P.P. 10,232 2/1998 Fear et al. Plt./39

1 Drawing Sheet

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ORIGIN OF THE VARIETY

The new and distinct variety of apricot tree (*Prunus armeniaca*) was selected from a population of approximately 2000 seedlings originated by Dr Ron Beatson in 1986. The seedlings were grown on a site near Clyde, Central Otago, New Zealand's major apricot growing area. The seedlings began to fruit in 1990, and were evaluated for tree health and fruit flavor, and to a lesser extent skin finish, size and color. In 1993, 49 elite seedlings were selected by Dr. Dominique Noiton from this population and grafted onto Golden peach rootstocks for further evaluation. One of the seedlings, an open-pollinated seedling of Clutha 14/107 (an unpatented New Zealand variety) showed desirable commercial characteristics after initial evaluation and was propagated for further trials. Furthermore the new and distinct variety has been named 'Dunstan'.

bigger fruit size than 'Sundrop', has stronger flavor, and has brighter skin color.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATION

The accompanying photograph shows typical specimens of fruit and foliage of the new variety shortly after picking at commercial harvest maturity. The fruit is shown with the suture facing up (top right), view of the apex end (bottom right), side view (top left), view of the stem end (bottom left), a view of the fruit split along the suture line (top middle), and a view of the stone (bottom middle.)

The present new apricot tree was first asexually propagated at Clyde, Central Otago, by budding onto Golden Queen rootstocks, the standard apricot rootstock in New Zealand. Seedling rootstocks are routinely used in New Zealand for ease of propagation. "Golden Queen" is a peach (*Prunus persica*) variety that is commonly used because it is readily available and easily propagated from stones. It is a relatively vigorous stock that imparts vigor to the scion variety similar to that of trees on their own roots. It also imparts some tolerance to bacterial diseases such as *Pseudomonas syringae*. The resulting trees have propagated true-to-type showing that the distinctive characteristics are established and transmitted successfully through succeeding generations.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following is a detailed description of the new and distinct variety of apricot tree based on observation of the specimens grown in Clyde, Central Otago, New Zealand. Color code terminology (except those in common terms) is in accordance with The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIETY

The new and distinct variety of apricot tree is large size, has moderately vigorous upright growth, and is a regular and productive bearer of medium-large sized, firm, juicy fruit with sweet mild flavor and excellent eating quality. The fruit is further characterised by early to mid-season ripening. 'Dunstan' is similar in appearance to the apricot 'Sundrop' (unpatented), however, 'Dunstan' ripens 5-6 days later, has

Tree:

Size.—The mature tree, from the age of six years and older is typically about 4 meters high by about 6 meters wide, when grown as a multi-leader vase-shaped tree; stem length and caliper are typical of the species.

Vigor.—Typically the amount of growth during one growing season (one year) on any shoot is about 600 to about 1000 mm.

Form.—Spreading to upright growth habit.

Productivity.—Typical production from a mature tree of five years or older is about 50 kg/tree.

Bearing.—Regular.

Health.—Very healthy.

Trunk:

Form.—Stocky.

Texture.—Rough.

Color.—Dark brown (200B).

Branches:

Size.—Medium thickness, long.

Surface.—Rough.

Lenticels.—Numerous, prominent, aligned across the direction of the branch (165D).

Color of mature wood.—Dark brown (200B).

Color of fresh growth.—Dark red (184A).

Leaves:

Size.—Between 80–90 mm long and 70–80 mm wide for mature leaves.

Shape of tip.—Cuspidate.

Angle of tip.—Obtuse.

Shape of base.—Truncate.

Petiole.—About 45 mm long, 3–5 mm wide. Red coloration (184A) upper surface grooved.

Glands.—Ranging from 1–4 with an average of 2. Positioned on upper portion of petiole.

Margin.—Serrate.

Color.—Upper side, green (146A). Lower side, green (146B).

Shape.—Cordate.

Flower buds:

Size.—Medium.

Length.—Medium.

Shape.—Round, plump.

Form.—Free.

Surface.—Not pubescent.

Flowers:

Blooming period.—Bloom commences approximately on 26th October.

Size.—Medium, about 25 mm in diameter.

Color.—Near 155D.

Fruit:

Maturity when described.—Eating ripe.

Date of picking.—3rd week of January.

Size.—Large. Average diameter axially, 70 mm. Average transversely in suture plane, 60 mm.

Form.—Ovate, slightly flattened when in the suture plane, and slightly crowned at the stalk end.

Suture.—Shallow, extends from stem to apex.

Fruit base.—Rounded.

Weight.—Typically 90–120 grams per fruit.

Fruit flavor.—Sweet, low acid, typical apricot flavor.

Juice.—The fruit will express juice if squeezed.

Sugar content.—12–15% Brix.

Cavity.—Rounded.

Apex.—Rounded.

Skin:

Thickness.—Medium.

Texture.—Smooth.

Tendency to crack.—None.

Down.—Scant, very short.

Color.—Deep orange color 25B with a bright red 28A overblush.

Flesh:

Ripens.—Evenly.

Texture.—Firm.

Fibres.—Small, few, tender.

Flavor.—Excellent, sweet.

Eating quality.—Excellent.

Color.—Near the skin, orange 25B. Near the stone, orange 24C.

Stone:

Type.—Freestone, some flesh adherence along ventral edge.

Size.—Typical of the species.

Form.—Ovoid.

Base.—Straight.

Apex.—Nearly rounded.

Surface.—Regularly pitted.

Ridges.—Two distinct ridges towards the sharp end of the stone running on each side of the suture plane.

Color.—Dark brown 177A.

Tendency to split.—None.

Use: Dessert.

Market.—Local and export.

Keeping quality.—Good.

Shipping quality.—Good.

The tree, flowers, and fruit may vary in slight detail due to variations in soil types, cultural practices and climatic conditions; the present botanical description is that of the variety grown near Clyde, Central Otago, New Zealand.

We claim:

1. A new and distinct variety of apricot tree named 'Dunstan', substantially as illustrated and described.

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