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[54] NECTARINE TREE NAMED 'REGAL PEARL'

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[52] U.S. Cl. Plt./188

[58] Field of Search Plt./188

[56] References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

P.P. 7,193 3/1990 Bradford Plt./190
P.P. 9,358 11/1995 Bradford Plt./188

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[57] ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to a nectarine tree, *Prunus persica*, and more particularly to a new and distinct variety broadly characterized by a large size, vigorous, self-fertile, productive and regular bearing tree. The fruit matures under the ecological conditions described approximately the third week in August, with first picking on Aug. 16, 1998. The fruit is uniformly medium in size, subacidic and sweet in flavor, globose in shape, clingstone in type, very firm and crisp in texture, and mostly red in skin color. The variety was a first generation cross using 'Red Glen' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,193) nectarine as the seed parent and an unnamed white flesh nectarine seedling as the selected pollen parent.

1 Drawing Sheet

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BACKGROUND OF THE VARIETY

In a continuing effort to improve the quality of flesh market and shipping fruits, we, the inventors, typically hybridize a large number of nectarine and peach seedlings each year. The present invention relates to a new and distinct variety of nectarine tree, which has been denominated varietally as 'Regal Pearl'. The present variety was developed by us in 1992 in a cultivated area of our experimental orchard at Bradford Farms near Le Grand, Calif. in Merced County (San Joaquin Valley). It was a first generation cross using 'Red Glen' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,193) nectarine as the seed parent and an unnamed white flesh nectarine seedling as the selected pollen parent. Subsequent to origination of the present variety of nectarine tree, we asexually reproduced it by budding and grafting on Nemaguard (unpatented), rootstock, in the experimental orchard described above, and such reproduction of plant and fruit characteristics were true to the original plant in all respects.

The fruit produced by the present variety is most similar to the 'Fire Pearl' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 9,358) nectarine by producing white flesh nectarines that are subacidic in flavor, clingstone in type, and mostly red in skin color, but is distinguished therefrom and an improvement thereon by having reniform glands instead of globose and by producing fruit that ripens about two weeks later.

The present variety is similar to its seed parent, the 'Red Glen', by producing clingstone nectarines that are mostly red in skin color and very firm in texture, but is very distinguished therefrom by having a showy instead of non-showy blossom and by producing fruit that is white instead of yellow in flesh color, that is subacid and much sweeter in flavor, and that ripens about two weeks later.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The accompanying photograph exhibits four whole fruits positioned to display the characteristics of the skin color and form, a sectioned fruit sliced transverse to the suture plane to reveal the flesh and stone, and representative leaves.

POMOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Referring now more specifically to the pomological characteristics of this new and distinct variety of nectarine tree,

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the following has been observed under the ecological conditions prevailing near Le Grand, Merced County (San Joaquin Valley), Calif., and was developed at the state of hard shipping ripe on Aug. 19, 1998. All major color code designations are by reference to the Inter-Society Color Council, National Bureau of Standards. Common color names are also used occasionally.

TREE

Size: Large, reaching a height of 12' [3.66 meters] by the 6th year of growth, including typical dormant pruning.

Vigor: Vigorous, responding typically to irrigation and fertilization. The plant should be grown on a standard commercial rootstock for production purposes.

Growth: Upright and dense.

Form: Vase formed.

Hardiness: Hardy with respect to typical central California winters.

Production: Productive, thinning usually necessary.

Fertility: Self-fertile.

Bearing: Regular bearer, with no alternate bearing observed.

Trunk:

Size.—Medium, reaching a maximum diameter of 5" [127 mm.] after 6 years of growth.

Texture.—Medium to somewhat shaggy.

Bark color.—Grayish brown [61. gy.Br].

Lenticels.—Numerous. Color: Moderate brown [58. m.Br]. Typical Size: 1/8" to 3/8" [3.2–9.5 mm.].

Branches:

Size.—Medium, typical of the species.

Texture.—Smooth on 1st year wood, increasing roughness with age.

Color.—1st Year Wood Topside: Light grayish red [18. l.gy.R]. 1st Year Wood Underside: Brilliant yellow green [116. brill.YG]. Older Wood: Moderate brown [58. m.Br].

Lenticels.—Numerous, small. Color: Moderate orange [53. m.O]. Average Size: 1/16" [1.6 mm.].

Leaves:

Size.—Large. Average Length: 5 3/4" [146.1 mm.]. Average Width: 1 5/8" [41.3 mm.].

Thickness.—Medium.

Form.—Elliptical.
Apex.—Acuminate.
Base.—Acute.
Surface.—Smooth.
Color.—Dorsal Surface: Moderate olive green [125. m.OIG]. Ventral Surface: Moderate yellow green [120. m.YG].
Margin.—Finely serrate.
Venation.—Pinnately net veined.
Petiole.—Average Length: $\frac{7}{16}$ " [11.1 mm.]. Average Thickness: $\frac{1}{16}$ " [1.6 mm.]. Color: Light yellow green [119. 1.YG].
Stipules.—2 per leaf bud, up to 6 at the growing tip. Typical Length: $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ " [6.4–9.5 mm.].
Glands.—Numbers: 2 to 4 per leaf. Position: Oppositely positioned on petiole and base of blade. Size: Medium. Form: Reniform. Color: Dark grayish red [20. d.gy.R].

Flower buds:

Hardiness.—Hardy with respect to central California winters.
Diameter.—Typically $\frac{3}{8}$ " [9.5 mm.] 1 week before bloom.
Length.—Typically $\frac{5}{8}$ " [15.9 mm.] 1 week before bloom.
Form.—Free.
Surface.—Pubescent.

Flowers:

Blooming period.—Slightly later than most varieties.
Onset of bloom.—One percent on Mar. 3, 1998.
Duration of bloom.—One to two weeks, dependent on ambient temperature.
Type.—Showy.
Average diameter.— $1\frac{3}{4}$ " [44.5 mm.].
Color.—Pale pink [7. p.Pk].
Fragrance.—None to slight.

FRUIT

Maturity when described: Hard shipping ripe, Aug. 19, 1998.

Date of first picking: Aug. 16, 1998.

Date of last picking: Aug. 28, 1998.

Size: Uniform, medium.

Average diameter axially.— $2\frac{1}{2}$ " [63.5 mm.].

Average transversely in suture plane.— $2\frac{1}{2}$ " [63.5 mm.].

Typical weight.—5.71 ounces [162 grams].

Form: Globose, slightly compressed laterally, uniform, symmetrical.

Longitudinal section form.—Round.

Transverse section through diameter.—Round to elliptical.

Suture: An inconspicuous line toward the base becoming a very shallow groove toward the apex, with a slight depression at the pistil point.

Ventral surface: Rounded, lipped toward the apex.

Lips: Mostly equal.

Cavity: Flaring, circular, suture showing on one side, stem markings typical.

Depth.— $\frac{1}{2}$ " [12.7 mm.].

Breadth.— $\frac{3}{4}$ " [19.1 mm.].

Base: Truncate.

Apex: Rounded.

Pistil point: Negligible in length, indented within the suture.

Stem: Medium.

Average length.— $\frac{3}{8}$ " [9.5 mm.].

Average width.— $\frac{3}{16}$ " [4.8 mm.].

Skin:

Thickness.—Medium.

Texture.—Medium.

Taste.—Somewhat astringent.

Tenacity.—Tenacious to flesh.

Tendency to crack.—None observed.

Color.—Dark red [16. d.R] mottled over a moderate red [15. m.R] background with considerable pale orange yellow [73. p.OY] freckling on the sides and toward the apex.

Flesh:

Color.—Yellowish white [92. yWhite] with dark red [16. d.R] streaking toward the stone.

Surface of pit cavity.—Dark red [16. d.R] fibers breaking when twisted away from the stone.

Amygdalin.—Slight.

Juice.—Abundant, rich.

Texture.—Firm, crisp.

Fibers.—Abundant, fine.

Ripens.—Slightly earlier at the apex.

Flavor.—Subacid and sweet, with a slight astringency at the skin, typically 16 to 20 brix.

Aroma.—Slight.

Eating quality.—Very good.

STONE

Type: Clingstone.

Form: Oval.

Base: Straight.

Apex: Acute.

Hilum: Narrow.

Sides: Equal.

Surface: Irregularly furrowed toward the apex, pitted toward the base.

Ridges: Jagged toward the base.

Color: Light brown [57. l.Br] when dry.

Pit wall: $\frac{1}{4}$ " [6.4 mm.] thick.

Average width: Approximately 1".

Average length: Approximately $1\frac{3}{16}$ ".

Tendency to split: Slight in wet season.

Kernel:

Form.—Oval.

Taste.—Very bitter.

Viable.—Yes.

Average width.— $\frac{1}{2}$ " [12.7 mm.].

Average length.— $1\frac{1}{16}$ " [17.5 mm.].

Skin color.—Pale yellow [89. p.Y] with grayish brown [61. gy.Br] veins when first removed from stone.

Pellicle color.—Grayish brown [61. gy.Br].

Amygdalin.—Abundant.

USE

Market: Fresh and long distance shipping.

Keeping quality: Fruit quality observed to remain in good condition in excess of 14 days in cold room at 36° Fahrenheit [2° Celsius].

Resistance to insects: No unusual susceptibilities noted.

Resistance to diseases: No unusual susceptibilities noted.

Although the new variety of nectarine tree possesses the described characteristics under the ecological conditions at Le Grand, Calif., in the central part of the San Joaquin Valley, it is to be expected that variations in these characteristics may occur when farmed in areas with different

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climatic conditions, different soil types, and/or varying cultural practices.

We claim:

1. A new and distinct variety of nectarine tree, substantially as illustrated and described, that is most similar to the 'Fire Pearl' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 9,358) nectarine by pro-

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ducing white flesh nectarines that are subacidic in flavor, clingstone in type, and mostly red in skin color, but is distinguished therefrom and an improvement thereon by having reniform glands instead of globose and by producing fruit that ripens about two weeks later.

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