

Apogee differentially reduced growth in the top of dwarf apple trees and may be a viable commercial tool for managing such trees. Combined with results from the two previous years, the best response from NAA is

obtained from application at 1.5% in a reasonable flexible tree paint in a 3-inch band at the base of one-year-old wood. Treatment at or near bloom gives a good response.



Evaluation of New Fruit Acres (FA) Named/Numbered Peach Varieties/ Selections

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In 2005, evaluation of new named and numbered peach selections from the Fruit Acres (FA) peach breeding program in southwest Michigan (Annette and Randy Bjorge) continued at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard Research & Education Center in Belchertown. These newer, generally highly coloring varieties are a promising alternative (primarily because they are highly red colored) to currently planted peach cultivars for direct-market Massachusetts peach growers. However, little has been reported on their general hardiness and adaptability to this area. This evaluation is an ongoing partnership with International Plant Management (IPM), Lawrence, MI.

Fruit from FA named and numbered peach trees planted from 2001-04 were harvested and evaluated (10-peach sample) in 2005 over a period from July 26 to September 29. Note that all trees are planted at high-density (4-5 feet between trees) and grown to a perpendicular-V training system. Brief results of this 2005 evaluation of named FA cultivars are presented

in Table 1. Numbered FA selections (FA-XXX, 24 of them) were evaluated but not included per a confidentiality agreement with IPM.

Risingstar and Blazingstar are probably already the most widely planted FA peaches in Massachusetts. In fact, we already grow them commercially at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard. Blazingstar is a little less bud hardy than we might like. Earlystar (FA-101) and Brightstar (FA-102) are newly named and appear very promising, particularly Earlystar because of its early harvest. Among the rest, Redstar and Starfire are 'red-color enhanced' alternatives to Redhaven, while Allstar does not appear to stand out. Blushingstar is a white-flesh peach that has some promise, however, very uneven ripening may be an issue.

These named FA cultivars will continue to be evaluated in 2006, along with a more limited number of the numbered selections as some of these have already been discontinued by IPM and trees will be removed this growing season.

Table 1. Characteristics of new named and numbered peach selections from the Fruit Acres (FA) peach breeding program, evaluated in Belchertown, MA, at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard Research & Education Center.

Cultivar	Harvest date	Flesh color	Fruit diameter (in.)	Shape	Red skin (%)	Flesh firmness (lbs)	Soluble solids conc. (%)	Comments
EarlyStar FA-101	July 26	yellow	2.9	round	65	5.5	10.5	Looks nice for an early peach; good color, size, crop load; appears to be winter hardy
RisingStar	August 1	yellow	2.58	round	70	4.5	12	Has become an early standard; bud hardy
BrightStar FA-102	August 8	yellow	2.5	round	55	2	10	a little over-ripe; on the small side; attractive (little fuzz), good flavor
Blazing Star	August 22	yellow	2.75	round	80	9	10.5	nice, even maturity, far better color than Redhaven (same season); moderately bud hardy
Redhaven	August 23	yellow	2.9	round	35	4.5	11	nice, really ready to go, been picking for a week
StarFire	August 23	yellow	2.9	oblong	80	9	11	a little early; deep red blush; some ribbing noticed; could be picked later
RedStar	August 25	yellow	2.9	round	65	4	10.5	a little over-mature; should be picked before Redhaven; good yellow peach flavor
Allstar	August 31	yellow	2.9	round	65	9	10	Nothing special; needs further evaluation
BlushingStar	September 5	white	2.9	round	70	na	na	flesh red around pit (trace); some very soft (uneven ripening?); rather tart, but otherwise nice; needs further evaluation

