

# Currants



'Ben Como'

Two blackcurrants, named 'Ben Como' and 'Ben Chaska,' were bred in Scotland and have been tested in Minnesota since 1999. They are resistant to white pine blister rust, and are productive, upright plants with excellent fruit quality for processing into juice or jelly. The names are a fusion of Scotland and Minnesota—a continuation of the renowned "Ben" series of blackcurrants from the Scottish breeding program (Ben is the word for mountain) combined with two notable Minnesota place names.



'Red Lake'

'Red Lake' has been popular in Europe and across the United States. Introduced in 1933, it is highly productive. Plants have large clusters of red, medium-size fruits, excellent for use in jellies, salads, and desserts.

# Apricots

Apricots, cherries, and plums grow rapidly and often produce fruit in the first or second year—a joy for home orchards and a benefit to fruit breeders evaluating fruit for flavor, texture, and timing. University fruit breeders continue



to investigate wild germplasm in breeding fruit plants that better resist cold-temperature injury. The fruit breeding program also evaluates varieties from other breeding programs around the world—apples, apricots, and pears from China; cherries and currants from Europe—looking for any fruit that may be adaptable to our region.



'Sungold'

Apricots are fine, ornamental small trees with an early spring bloom and bright orange-yellow fall color. Because two varieties of apricots are needed for cross-pollination, U of M 'Sungold' and 'Moongold' cultivars make a good planting combination. The fruit is fair for fresh eating and good for preserves and sauces.



'Summercrisp'

APRICOT CULTIVAR	YEAR	RIPENS	FEATURES
Moongold	1960	Late July	Golden yellow. Very hardy. Blooms the third week of April. 1 3/4" fruit hangs on tree until ripe. Self-unfruitful. Freestone.
Sungold	1960	Early August	Yellow with red blush. Very hardy, 1 1/4" fruit with clear flesh. Fruit hangs on the tree until ripe. Mild flavor. Upright growth habit. Blooms third week of April. Requires another apricot for cross-pollination. Freestone.

PEAR CULTIVAR	YEAR	RIPENS	FEATURES
Golden Spice	1949	Early Sept	A small, very hardy pear. The 1 3/4" fruits are a medium yellow, lightly blushed with dull red. Flesh is tart, spicy and ready for harvest in midseason. Good for canning and spicing. Fair for eating.
Parker	1934	Mid-August	Medium to large, roundish, yellow-bronze fruit. Popular for fine-grained, tender, juicy flesh. Fruit must be picked before it ripens. Upright, vigorous growing tree used as pollinator for 'Luscious.' Tree susceptible to fire blight.
Summercrisp	1985	Mid-August	Sweet flavored, crisp fruit. 2 1/2-3" in diameter and 3-4" long. Blooms early May. Fruit harvested when crisp, green with a red blush, and may be stored up to two months. Hardest pear at University of Minnesota.

● 1923: 'La Crescent' plum released

● 1933: 'Red Lake' currant released

● 1985: 'Summercrisp' pear released

# Pears



'Summercrisp'

'Summercrisp' pear is hardy in most of Minnesota. To improve productivity, plant another type of pear to serve as a pollinator. Researchers are testing seven selections from which several new cultivars may be introduced in the next decade.

# Cherries



'Meteor'

'Meteor' tart cherry is hardy in central and southern Minnesota. Cherries bloom earlier than apples, so the flowers have a greater chance of being killed by a late spring frost. Protecting the fruit from birds is almost essential as they like them as well as people do!

# Plums



'Alderman'

'Alderman' plums are large, with golden flesh and burgundy skin. Horizontal branches make it an attractive small tree in the landscape. Plant 'Superior,' 'Toka,' or 'Compass' as pollinators for best fruit set.

TART CHERRY CULTIVAR	YEAR	RIPENS	FEATURES
Meteor	1952	Mid-July	Semidwarf (10-14'). Hardy, vigorous, pie cherry tree with large bright red fruit. No cross-pollination needed.
North Star	1950	Early July	Dwarf tree (7-10'). Pie cherry. No cross-pollination needed. Very productive. Bright red deepening to mahogany skin. Yellow, juicy, tender flesh. Tree resistant to leaf spot and brown rot.

PLUM CULTIVAR	YEAR	RIPENS	FEATURES
Alderman	1986	Late August	Fruit is burgundy red with golden yellow, sweet, juicy flesh. Eat fresh or use for preserves. Tree is valued as an ornamental and fruits consistently. Clingstone.
La Crescent	1923	Early August	High-quality yellow plum. Fruit is small to medium, sometimes with a light blush skin. Flesh is sweet, juicy. Freestone. Somewhat suggestive of apricots. Vigorous grower but often a shy bearer.
Pipestone	1942	Late August	Large, attractive red fruits for drier areas. Sweet, juicy yellow fruit. Excellent quality for jam, jellies, and fresh use. Very hardy. Tree is productive. Clingstone.
Superior	1933	Mid-August	Hybrid with large fruit with dark red, russet-dotted skin. Flesh is yellow, juicy, and sweet. Heavy bearing tree may lack hardiness in north. Often sets fruit the first year. Clingstone.
Underwood	1920	Late July	Medium-large, red fruit with golden yellow flesh. Juicy and sweet flavor. High quality for fresh use and jam. Clingstone. Hardy, vigorous grower with horizontal spread.



'Superior'

## Choices, choices

The selections that perform well in regional trials are the plants that will become future cultivars. Stock plants of these new cultivars are provided to commercial nurseries, who spend the next few years propagating the large quantities of plants needed for retail sales.

Cultivars developed by University of Minnesota plant breeders are released through the Minnesota Nursery Research Corporation or through the University of Minnesota's Office for Technology Commercialization.

In either case, royalties collected from cultivar releases play a vital part in providing financial support for future research.

### KNOW TO GROW

Hybrid plums are not self-fruitful; therefore, at least two varieties must be planted. Tart cherries are self-fruitful, so a single-variety orchard could be planted.