'Golden Blaze' Peach

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'Golden Blaze' peach [*Prunus persica* (L) Batsch] was released for grower trial by the Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (ISA) in 1985 (Fig. 1). It bears large, attractive, highly blushed fruit with firm yellow to light orange flesh and ripens 6 days after 'Redhaven'. It is a nonmelting clingstone suitable for fresh fruit marketing, shipping, and preserving.

Origin

'Golden Blaze' originated from a cross of 'Babygold No. 7' x 'Oom Sarel' made by A. Czerkasky in the early 1970s. 'Oom Sarel' is a nonmelting clingstone that originated in South Africa. 'Golden Blaze' was selected from a population of 332 seedlings in 1984 as 4-2-21 and was propagated for commercial evaluation in 1985 as T241. Fruit were assessed at ISA from 1983 to 1988 on the Cantilever Trellis (Jones and Mitchell 1978) and at several commercial plantings from 1986 to 1990 on Tatura Trellis (Van den Ende and Chalmers, 1982).

Description

'Golden Blaze' matures from 11 to 19 Jan. (July in the norther hemisphere), 6 days after 'Redhaven' and 55 days before 'Golden Queen'. Seasonal variation of first pick date varies from 6 to 14 Jan. and average harvest duration is 9 days. Based on a winter chill requirement taken in 1991, 'Golden Blaze' required similar chill hours (800h under 7C) as did 'Golden Queen'.

Fruit size is medium to large averaging 70 mm in diameter (range 65 to 75 mm). The fruit is round to slightly oblique (Sefick and Blake, 1936) with a slightly uneven suture and a moderate point at the calyx end. Fruit halves are almost equal. The skin is covered with an attractive 40% to 60% scarlet-maroon blush arranged in streaks fading to speckle toward the stem end over a pale green to a golden ground color that turns rich golden within 2 days after picking. The fruit has medium pubescence with yellow to light orange (9G6) (Maerz and Paul, 1950) flesh at harvest and coloring evenly from the pit outward.

A slight red pigmentation of the flesh has been observed beneath areas of heavy skin blush in some fruits as well as red pigmentation around the pit. Flesh is of moderately fine texture, firm, nonmelting, but juicy, and, in our opinion, full flavored and moderately sweet ($^{\circ}$ Brix 14.0) with an attractive peachy aroma. 'Golden Blaze' is classified as a clingstone with good separation of flesh from the pit when twisted. Pits are medium sized and have no tendency to split. They are red with medium sized fissures and light red pigmentation on the surface of the pit with no extension into the flesh. Pit cavity is moderately coarse.

Trees are of medium vigor growing on their own roots (Issell and Chalmers, 1979). The growth habit is relatively upright with a slender trunk. Laterals are medium length with red coloration on 1-year-old laterals where exposed to the sun. Flower buds are evenly distributed along laterals. Flowers are showy and medium pink. Full bloom is 4 days before 'Golden Queen' and 3 days before 'Redhaven' on average (1983 to 1990). Renewal pruning is necessary for good return of lateral growth and tree vigor. Tree architecture and growth habit are closely re-

lated to those of 'Babygold No. 7' parentage. Vegetative influence from 'Oom Sarel' is not evident in this cross. Leaves are medium sized, averaging 155mm long x 40-mm broad at the midshoot when measured at midseason and are deep green, fairly flat, and have medium sized beaked serrations that point to the leaf tip with tiny dark points and four to five serrations per 10 mm measured midleaf. Glands are typically small reniform, one on each side of the petiole at the base of the lamina (Gregory, 1915). Trees set a moderately high number of flower buds and require moderate fruit thinning, $\approx$ 10 to 15% fruit removal at the start of stone hardening. Laterals do not need to be tipped at pruning. Moderate preharvest drop has been measured (1985 to 1988), varying from 5% to 10%. Mature trees planted at a density of 2000 trees/ha on Tatura Trellis should average 40 t/ha¹ with a size range of 60- to 80-mm diameter.

'Golden Blaze' is a firm-fleshed, versatile peach with good handling qualities and appealing aroma. Fruit can be stored at 1C for 10 to 15 days and still have 4 to 5 days shelf life with little drop in quality. 'Golden Blaze' is an ideal fruit for distant markets.

Availability

The Dept. of Agriculture's commercial arm, Daratech, has licenced the international rights of 'Golden Blaze' to the Australian Nurserymen's Fruit Improvement Co. Requests for this cultivar may be directed to B. Owen French, Secretary, Australian Nurserymen's Fruit Improvement Co., 21 Toolang Road, St. Ives, NSW 2075, Australia.

Fig. 1. 'Golden Blaze' peach.

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