'FlordaRio' Peach

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'FlordaRio' peach [*Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch] trees produce a medium-sized, attractive, yellow-fleshed fruit that is adapted to northern Florida. This cultivar is recommended for trial where 'Flordaking' (Andrews et al., 1979) and 'Flordaglobe' (Andersen et al., 1990) have been grown successfully. All peach cultivars released by the Univ. of Florida Agricultural Expt. Station begin with the prefix "Florida." The suffix was added to this cultivar to indicate that the fruit characteristics are similar to 'RioGrande' peach.

Origin

'FlordaRio' originated from a 1981 cross of 'Harken' x 'EarliGrande'. It was designated as M 3-2 because it was the second peach selected in 1983. 'FlordaRio' has been evaluated in Monticello, Fla., on a single budded tree from 1985 to 1988 and on several budded trees in 1989 through 1994.

Description

'FlordaRio' leaf and flower budbreak is ≈400 chilling units (cu) (Table 1), as defined in

Richardson et al. (1974). The chilling requirement was determined from blooming and leafing dates in relation to standard cultivars. From 1989 to 1994, bloom dates varied from mid- to late-February to early March, or 0 to 33 days after 'Flordaking' (350 to 375 cu). From 1985 to 1988, bloom and harvest dates varied from 25 Feb. to 6 Mar. and from 10 May to 7 June, respectively (data not shown). The year-to-year variation in bloom and harvest dates of 'FlordaRio', compared to those of 'Flordaking', is substantial in northern Florida, primarily due to the tendency of 'Flordaking' to bloom after a warm period during midwinter. 'FlordaRio' trees have fruited well when the coldest month averaged 13 to 15C and in colder locations in the absence of spring frosts. Trees respond well to pruning and are easily trained to an open center. Flower-bud set is higher than for 'Flordaking', and in the absence of spring frosts, manual flower or fruit thinning normally is required to achieve optimum fruit size.

In northern Florida, the major advantages of 'FlordaRio' are reliable cropping; large fruit size; attractive fruit appearance; and, as judged by us, good fruit flavor. Fruit usually ripen at about the same time as 'June Gold' (during late May) in northern Florida. The fruit development period is ≈92 days. 'FlordaRio' fruit are moderate to large for the maturity season, averaging 8 cm in diameter and weighing 140 g. Fruit spacing of 15 to 20 cm on a branch is required for optimum fruit sizing.

'FlordaRio' fruit are fairly round with no prominent tip. Fruit have a noticeable, but not pronounced, bulging suture. 'FlordaRio' fruit appearance has been rated superior to 'Flordaking' and 'JuneGold'. Fruit have a 70% to 80% red blush over a bright yellow ground color. Flesh characteristics are similar to those of 'Flordaking'. Flesh is firm, melting in character, and relatively non-browning when cut or bruised; it is semi-cling because it adheres to the pit when soft ripe. We have rated fruit flavor higher than that of 'Flordaking' and similar to that of 'June Gold'. Pits are medium in size and have little tendency to split compared to 'Flordaking' and 'June Gold'.

'FlordaRio' flowers are self-fertile. Trees are moderately vigorous and productive and are easily trained to an open center. Leaves are average in size (smaller than 'Flordaking') with globose petiolar glands. Flowers are light pink and nonshowy. Pollen is bright yellow and abundant. 'FlordaRio' leaves and fruit are as resistant to bacterial spot [*Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *pruni* (Smith) Dye] as 'Flordaking'.

Availability

Budwood has been released to commercial nurseries, and limited quantities of budwood may be obtained from the North Florida Research and Education Center—Monticello, Route 4, Box 4092, Monticello, FL 32344. Inquiry regarding budwood availability can be directed to Florida Foundation Seed Producers, P.O. Box 309, Greenwood, FL 32433. Virus status of budwood has not been assessed.

Literature Cited

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 Richardson, E.A., S.D. Seeley, and D.R. Walker. 1974. A model for estimating the completion of rest for 'Redhaven' and 'Elberta' peach trees. HortScience 9:331–332.

Table 1. Characteristics of 'FlordaRio' peach at the North Florida Research and Education Center—Monticello.

Location	Bloom			Harvest		Fruit development period (days)	Crop load ^b	Red overcolor ^c	Fruit size (g)	Fruit shape ^w
	Chill units ^a	Date (50% bloom)	Days before or after 'Flordaking'	First harvest date	Days before 'Flordaking'					
1989	425	3 Mar.	33	25 May	NA ^v	82	10	7	145	8
1991	375	18 Feb.	0	22 May	21	95	6	7	161	7
1992	375	22 Feb.	2	27 May	30	98	8	8	119	8
1993	425	4 Mar.	18	8 June	NA	95	10	7	136	7
1994	400	20 Feb.	2	23 May	18	94	10+	8	110	7

^aChill units are based on bloom and leafing times in relation to established key cultivars.

^bCrop load rating: 10 = full crop; 0 = no crop; 10+ = crop not adequately thinned.

^cRed overcolor: 10 = completely red; 0 = no red.

^wFruit shape: 10 = most desirable shape (perfectly round); 0 = least desirable shape.

^vNA = Information is not available.