'La Rouge' Peach

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'La Rouge' is a yellow flesh, freestone peach [*Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch] for fresh market. This is the twenty-third peach released from the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center breeding program. The peach breeding project was initiated in the 1940s to develop cultivars adapted to the lower and Gulf South region. 'La Rouge' is a midseason ripening peach with melting flesh being released for growers in areas that receive 600 chilling hours below 7.2 °C during the dormant period.

Origin

'La Rouge' first fruited in 1973 and was tested as L1-27-13. This selection was evaluated at Idlewild Research Station, Clinton, La. Additional evaluations were made at grower locations in southern Louisiana and research stations in Georgia. The original tree was selected by P.L. Hawthorne from a group of open-pollinated seedlings derived from L 9-10-40 (pedigree in Fig. 1).

Description and Performance

Trees of 'La Rouge' were grown in a research orchard at the Idlewild Research Station, Clinton, La. [lat. 30° 49'N 88° 40'W]. Annual evaluations were made on the original tree and trees budded to 'Lovell' rootstock. Data were also obtained from trees growing in two tree plots replicated three times in an orchard alongside elite selections and recommended cultivars. Trees in the orchard were trained to an open center form. Recommended cultural practices and nutrients were applied to the entire orchard according to extension service recommendations (Puls, et al, 1994). Trees of 'La Rouge' were grown in an orchard alongside cultivars that were susceptible to bacterial spot caused by *Xanthomonas campestris* pv *pruni* (Smith) Dye.

When properly thinned to 15 cm apart, 'La Rouge' produces fruit 65 to 70 mm in diameter (125 to 225 g) with yellow flesh and some red flesh near the suture and pit areas. The ground color is yellow with about 70% bright red overcolor. Fruit are round to slightly oval in shape

(Fig. 2). The fruit is uniformly firm on cheek at suture and side opposite suture. Pubescence is short and nonobjectionable for marketing field-packed fruit for local markets. A uniform rating system of recording information was used to rate fruiting characteristics of each cultivar and selection independently. Over a 12-year period 'La Rouge' consistently produced firm, attractive fruit with a mean score 8.2 ± 0.7 and 8.3 ± 0.6 out of a possible 10. There were no notations of split pits in the records of this selection for the past 12 years. Fruit of this selection ripens the last week of June (Hawthorne et al., 1980) in Clinton. (Table 1).

Fig 2. 'La Rouge' Peach.

Table 1. Comparison of full bloom and fruit ripening dates of 'La Rouge' with 'La Feliciana' and 'La White' cultivars 1986–2000, Clinton, La.

Selection	Years of observation (no.)	Mean harvest date ^z	Mean date full bloom ^y	Estimated chill hours required ^x
'La Feliciana'	14	176 ± 7.2	60 ± 5.5	500–550
'La White'	14	161 ± 5.2	77 ± 7.1	650–700
'La Rouge'	10	177 ± 7.4	72 ± 5.2	600

^xDates of full bloom are mean dates over the same 10-year period for all cultivars.

^yJulian calendar dates.

^zChilling hour requirement was estimated by comparing the time of full bloom to cultivars of known chilling requirement, i.e., 'La Feliciana' and 'La White' for a 10-year period.

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Attributes of 'La Rouge' fruit are comparable to commercially recommended cultivars in respect to pH, percent soluble solids and titratable acids (Table 2).

Blossoms of 'La Rouge' are self-fertile and showy. Cold hardiness of the blossoms is good when compared to 'La Feliciana' and other cultivars within same bloom period (Hawthorne et al, 1980). Full bloom is mid March in southern Louisiana, which is consistent with selections and cultivars of the same chilling hour requirement at Clinton.

Leaves are medium to large in size with two to four small reniform petiolar glands. Trees are vigorous and have shown no excessive tendency toward sun scald or cold damage. Fruit and leaf buds require about 600 h at or below 7.2 °C during the dormant period.

Results of experimental plantings have shown 'La Rouge' to be a consistent producer of large freestone fruit of good quality. This cultivar would service local and pick-your-own type growers. This cultivar ripens about the last

Fig. 1 Pedigree of 'La Rouge'. O.P. = open pollinated.

Table 2. Comparison of 'La Rouge' fruit to standard cultivars in total sugar and acid composition 1999–2000, Clinton, La.

Variety	pH	Soluble solids ^z (%)	Titrateable acidity ^y (%)	Solids to acids ratio
'Hawthorne'	3.19	16.0 a	0.8 a	20.0 a
'Dixiland'	3.73	19.1 b	0.9 a	21.1 a
'La Rouge'	3.72	16.7 a	0.7 a	22.8 a

^zPercent soluble solids were determined by bench type refractometer.

^yPercent titrateable acid were determined by titrating a 10-mL sample to an end point pH 8.1.

^xMeans followed by the same letter within a column are not significantly different according to Duncan's test ($P \leq 0.05$). Five uniformly ripe fruit were harvested from each of three trees in 1999 and 2000. Each tree was a replication. Five fruit from each tree were peeled, macerated, and blended together before samples were taken.

week in June in southern Louisiana or about 1 day after 'La Feliciana'. The ripening season would help fill a gap in production between 'La Feliciana' and 'Dixieland'.

Availability

The LSU AgCenter does not have nursery trees of this cultivar available. Commercial nurseries will be furnished bud wood on a first-come basis for production of nursery trees.

Literature Cited

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