

'Pink Lady' Apple

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'Pink Lady' has been released from the Western Australian apple (*Malus domestica* Borkh.) breeding program designed to produce late-maturing, long-storing cultivars. 'Pink Lady' fruit mature 8 to 9 weeks after those of 'Red Delicious' and are of superior size, appearance, and flavor relative to those of other late-maturing cultivars.

Origin

'Pink Lady' originated from a cross between 'Lady Williams' and 'Golden Delicious' made at the Stoneville Horticultural Research Station near Perth, Western Australia (lat. 32°S, long. 116°E), in 1973 by J.E.L. Cripps. The aim of the cross was to combine the sweet, superficial-scald-free fruit of 'Golden Delicious' with the firm, long-storing fruit of 'Lady Williams'. The latter is a Western Australian chance seedling that probably resulted from across between 'Granny Smith' and 'Rokewood' (a cultivar of unknown parentage). 'Rokewood' was used as a long-storing cultivar in the days before refrigeration. The 'Pink Lady' seedling (formerly 10/1 38) was selected in 1979 and propagated on MM.101 rootstock for advanced testing in 1980. It was released to the industry for commercial evaluation in 1986.

Description and performance

'Pink Lady' trees are vigorous (slightly more vigorous than those of 'Gala') and have dense shoot growth with large leaves; thus, there is a need to thin growth to allow sufficient light penetration. Fruiting is on spurs and terminals. Branches make wide angles with main stems, so trees are trained easily with central leaders. Dwarfing rootstock should be used for 'Pink Lady'; MM.106 is generally suitable. The rootstock MM.104 and MM.109 also have been used in evaluations, but M.26, which could be suitable, has not been tested.

Flowering is at the same time as 'Granny Smith'; 'Gala', 'Fuji', and 'Red Delicious' are good pollinators. Fruit mature 8 to 9 weeks after those of 'Red Delicious', 2 to 3 weeks after those of 'Granny Smith', and 4 weeks before those of 'Lady Williams'. 'Pink Lady' fruit (Fig. 1) are medium to large in size (70 to 75 mm average diameter) and oblong-conical in shape.

The calyx basin is deep and wide. About 30% to 60% of the surface is green-yellow (green group 151B) and 40% to 70% is solid pinkish-red (red group 47A) (Royal Horticultural Society, 1966). The skin is ridged in fruit from young trees but smooth in fruit from mature trees. Skin is thin and lenticels usually are not conspicuous. Occasionally, 2 to 3 cm² of pale russet is seen in the stem cavity.

Flesh is white (white group 155A) and dense, firm, moderately juicy, and sweet, with an acid balance [12.5% to 13.5% total soluble solids concentration (SSC) and 0.71% to 0.9% titratable acidity]. Mean SSC is 13.0% compared with 14.0% for 'Golden Delicious' and 12.3% for 'Lady Williams'. Mean titratable acidity is 0.73% compared with 0.32% for 'Golden Delicious' and 0.83% for 'Lady Williams'. 'Pink Lady' is perceived to be a crisp, crunchy apple (fruit firmness 83 N at harvest compared with 80 N for 'Golden Delicious').

It has a shelf life of 14 days at 20C. Storage life in air at 0 to 1C is 4 months and in a controlled atmosphere 8 to 9 months, although it has been stored longer.

The cultivar does not develop bitter pit. If it is harvested at the correct maturity and stored in a controlled atmosphere, superficial scald does not appear; but, when harvested early and stored in air, up to 30% of the fruit may show a slight scald on 50% of their surface. 'Pink Lady' is susceptible to apple scab [*Venturia inaequalis* (Cke) Wint] and slightly susceptible to powdery mildew [*Podosphaera leucotricha* (Ell and Ev) Salm]. The susceptibility to fireblight [*Erwinia amylovora* (Burr) Winslow et al.] is unknown, as this disease does not occur in Australia, but it probably is susceptible.

Availability

In the United States, plant patent 0788006/09/1992Y Apple Tree Cripps Cultivar (aka 'Pink Lady') has been issued.

E.W. Brandt and Sons, Parker, Wash., holds an exclusive license. It is unlikely that trees will be available before 1995.

Literature Cited

Royal Horticultural Society. 1966. Royal Horticultural Society colour chart. Royal Hort. Soc., London, and Flower Council of Holland, Leiden.



Fig. 1. 'Pink Lady' apples.

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