GPG Times

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Improved Blackberry Developments Continue

Jamie Petchell

Following the signature of a representation contract with Niwa in Poland earlier this year, we can update that additional developments are moving apace with the new blackberry varieties. Trials of the Juhas and Maryna primocane blackberries have been established in a range of territories. Our partners are looking forward to seeing their first berries later this year from the primocane crop.

Current year results from Poland continue to demonstrate the exceptional fruit quality previously witnessed. Maryna is excelling as a double-cropping variety, whereas Juhas is at its best in pure primocane fruiting systems. We will update more later this season.

Agnieszka Orzel, Breeder at Niwa, commented, "I have been working on primocane blackberries for many years now. In addition to the obligatory fruit yield and quality aspects, I have focused on high levels of self-fertility and thornlessness. I am confident that the Maryna and Juhas varieties can adapt very well to the important global blackberry growing regions. Self-fertility is oft forgotten in Rubus breeding but it can have a huge impact on primocane yields in warmer climates. From our initial results, we see that Maryna is better adapted to double cropping and that Juhas is more suitable for single primocane harvesting."

Solving Problems With Better Genetics

Rupert Hargreaves

The wine industry worldwide is currently very nervous with increased levels of fan leaf virus and the arrival of Pierce disease in mainland Europe.
Fan leaf virus is spread by nematodes and stunts the growth of the vines, seriously affecting yield. The virus is spread by a specific nematode and, with the demise of soil sterilants in the wine grape industry, populations have been building up significantly in areas where continual wine grape production takes place.

Pierce Disease (PD) is a type of Xylella affecting wine grapes. It's had a presence in the Balearics for some time and has now made it to mainland Europe.

Fortunately, Dr Andy Walker at the University of California, Davis, had the foresight to predict these problems and channelled some of his plant breeding efforts accordingly.

GPG represents UC Davis for both the rootstocks and the PD resistant wine grape varieties so with that in mind, Claire Donkin and Rupert Hargreaves visited with some vineyards and grapevine nurseries along with Guillaume Mercier from Mercier's Nursery in France.

The visit to the Ojai Vineyard owned by Adam Tolmach in Southern California proved extremely beneficial, as all were able to see the vine production and learn of the different growing techniques and experiences per variety plus of course, trying the wines. Here, they tried 3 out of the 5 new varieties, namely Paseante Noir, Caminante Blanc and Ambulo Blanc.

The Paseante Noir was extremely impressive. It is deep red in colour with great floral qualities in the aroma. The alcohol content was 13%, impressive to be on the lighter side of the alcohol range for a dark/deep red wine.

The vines were extremely high yielding too which is encouraging.

Caminante Blanc produced an aromatic white wine being comparable to Sauvignon Blanc with a hint of Gewurtraminer. Once again, it has large yields and produced a wine with 12% alcohol content.

Ambulo Blanc has a Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc flavour profile. At this particular vineyard, they had a smaller area of this grape variety and were using it successfully in blends.

Visits were also made to leading grape vine nurseries Wonderful and Sunridge. As we all know, there is no substitute to visiting likeminded companies and getting grower to grower discussions taking place to achieve common goals. These visits proved hugely beneficial to all parties to understand and debate the best techniques to improve callusing and grafting of the GRN rootstocks.

The timing of the trip was important to make sure that GPG and our nursery partners are moving as fast as we can to have enough plant material being tested in advance of the 2 potential devastating problems affecting the wine industry. The first trials of the GRNs have now been planted in the Champagne region of France so we will soon have indications on their ability to control the nematodes and also their adaptability to the limestone soils.

The highlight of the trip over and above the practical knowledge discussed and shared, was the Paseante Noir. We feel this variety has a place in the wine industry almost irrespective of the fact that it happens to be PD resistant too.

The next 2 years will be hugely exciting for Claire and the team to trial and test these further with Mercier and Provedo in Spain.

The Rise of The Blueberry Market: Fuelling Global Demand

GPG:

The global blueberry market is experiencing a significant surge, driven by the introduction of a new generation of blueberry genetics. These innovative varieties are capturing the attention of consumers worldwide, leading to a growing demand for high-quality blueberries. As the market expands, consumers are becoming increasingly aware, recognising the importance of good genetics in delivering not only exceptional flavour but also the associated health and wellness benefits, balanced by an awareness of value.

Meeting the diverse demands of different consumer markets is made possible through the strategic use of advanced genetics. Whether it's the sweetness, high brix levels, berry size, or the ability to withstand shipping, each market has its own preferences. This is why specific genetics are chosen to ensure optimal production across various growing regions.

The continued growth in blueberry demand is a positive trend, aligning with market projections. At GPG, we are excited to deliver the new generation of blueberries which are leading this charge.
With upcoming varieties set to enter the market, we anticipate this growth trajectory will not only continue but also accelerate, further cementing blueberries as a consumer favourite.

Tridge:
Global Blueberry Market Summary

The global demand for blueberries is increasing, with the total production of 1.86 million tons needing to double to 3 million tons within the next five years. The nutritional and health benefits of blueberries have led to their consumption in various forms around the world. The industry is expecting to continue to grow, particularly in Asia, with China, the United States, and Peru being the major blueberry producing countries.

Despite weather conditions causing a 23% drop in exports, Peru's blueberry exports increased by 29% to $18.800 million due to a global supply shortage, and are expected to reach nearly 300,000 tons in the 2024/25 season, with potential record revenues of up to $1.99 billion.

Source - Tridge
https://www.tridge.com/news/the-blueberry-market-is-in-serious-short-sup-kffsfh?utm_medium=email&utm_source=interaction&utm_campaign=dailydigest

Leading New Genetics

From Oregon Blueberry

Jamie Petchell

We were excited to visit again with our friends and partners at the breeding programme at Oregon Blueberry in July. This was a great opportunity to examine the latest developments in the programme, checking on the plants and tasting the fruit.

The breeding activities are split into two areas, where endeavours are made to produce improved cultivars in both southern and northern highbush categories.

We are delighted to report that together with Oregon Blueberry, we are now planning to launch three new varieties; two of these will be for warmer climates with one being a new high-chill northern type. Yield and fruit quality are exceptional for each one and we will be sharing more in the coming weeks and months as the commercialisation process gets underway. The quality of these genetics is at an incredibly high level and we're anticipating excellent market uptake once they are launched.

Stay tuned to GPG on the usual channels to learn more about these exciting new blueberry varieties.

Fruit from the soon to be released northern highbush selection

Blackberry Season Is Underway in Europe

Marketing & Communications

Blackberry season is well underway in Europe so we thought we would highlight one of the crops with the GPG portfolio – the Blackberry!
We are currently seeing a huge change in the blackberry market, for both fresh and processed berries, where people's eating habits are changing, as new varieties are reaching the market. These new varieties are changing people's eating experience, and expectations for blackberries, as these new varieties have taste and eating experience at the forefront of the development and breeding process.

We currently have a select portfolio of blackberries, for different growing conditions, along with different berry attributes, for each grower's needs.
Our portfolio is ever growing, as new varieties become ready for the market which we think will help expand the market...

One of the varieties within our portfolio, taking the market by storm and exceeding the entire blackberry market's expectations is Von.

Von is showing to be an outstanding variety, in many different growing locations, and trials, all over the globe, and with different growing conditions.
Von blackberries are celebrated for their excellent fruit quality. They boast a high soluble solids content, which provides a sweet flavour, and low acid levels. Von blackberries also have very small seeds, which offers a unique texture and mouth-feel that sets them apart from other varieties.

For growers, Von blackberry presents several agronomic advantages, one being, that the plants have thornless canes and an upright growth habit, making them easy to manage in diverse growing situations. Another advantage of Von, the plants thrive with standard nutrient inputs, without requiring any special conditions, further simplifying the cultivation process.

The marketable yields of Von blackberries are industry-leading. This high productivity, combined with the fruit's exceptional quality, makes Von a valuable addition to blackberry production across various global regions.

The Von blackberry, with its superior eating quality, manageable growth characteristics, and exceptional productivity, is a key player in blackberry production worldwide. This variety not only enhances the consumer eating experience but also offers significant advantages to growers, making it an ideal choice for modern blackberry cultivation...

If you are looking to expand into Blackberries, please reach out to us at solutions@globalplantgenetics.com and we will discuss your needs!

Already one of our Von Licence holders or Growers and have not got our fruit harvesting guide?

Let us know so we can share this invaluable information with you, to help get the beat from the best genetics.

Clean Plants and Innovative Research at UC Davis Foundation Plant Services

From Dr. Maher - Director

UCDAVIS
Foundation Plant Services
Protecting agriculture through clean plants

Foundation Plant Services (FPS), established at the University of California, Davis in 1958 maintains virus-tested collections of grapes, fruit trees, roses, sweet potatoes, and strawberries. FPS provides many services to the global speciality crop industry, from import, quarantine, and therapy of grape and fruit tree material to the US, to research aimed at developing cutting edge diagnostics, and finally distribution of high-quality, virus-tested and true-to-type plant material.

Virus-tested grapevines make up FPS's largest collection, with over 2,300 selections of more than 1,100 varieties. UC Davis Grape rootstock varieties GRN-1 and GRN-3, licensed by Global Plant Genetics, Ltd, are maintained at FPS and available for global shipping to licensees. FPS is also the source of propagative material for UC Davis strawberry varieties – if you have handled cultivars like, UCD Moxie, UCD Royal Royce, UCD Valiant, UCD Victor, UCD Warrior, UCD Finn, and UCD Mojo, they got their start in the tissue culture laboratory at FPS.

UC Davis's five newest strawberry cultivars, UC Eclipse, UC Golden Gate, UC Keystone, UC Monarch, or UC Surfline, bred for resistance to Fusarium wilt, high yields, and improved fruit quality and released in 2023 have been available exclusively to California nurseries for the last two years, will be available January 2025 to global licensees.

The production of these strawberry varieties begins when the UC Davis strawberry breeding program transfers mother plants of advanced selections to FPS for virus testing and meristem tip culture therapy.

"We have a really great working relationship with the program,"

FPS Director Maher Al Rwahnih comments,

"In advance of the decision to release material, the program requests that we produce clean plants so they are ready to distribute as soon as possible."

FPS has worked closely with Global Plant Genetics for many years, and ships strawberry plantlets in vitro to customers around the world. The production of each of these plants begins in July, when the mothers are tested for viruses by grafting to virus indicator plants and direct HTS and PCR testing. These tests are required for the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Strawberry Registration & Certification Program, as well as many international import permits.

The mothers are then sent to heat treatment for three weeks at 37' C, which will rejuvenate the material and act as therapy against viruses. Following heat treatment...

Clean Plants & Innovative Research at UC Davis Foundation Plant Services... continued

Strawberry development - progress of plantlets from excised meristem tissue to 3-month old plantlet

... meristems are excised and placed on tissue culture media. The excised meristem tissue will develop into a plantlet over the course of 4-6 months, with lab staff evaluating and transferring to new media every two weeks. FPS ships the finished plantlets in vitro to laboratories and nurseries who will transfer them to soil.

The expertise at FPS is not limited to production of tissue culture plants. Dr. Al Rwahnih leads a cutting-edge diagnostic research laboratory focused on improving molecular technology utilized when screening plant material. For decades, the gold standard of virus testing in horticultural crops like grape, strawberry, cherry, and rose was the use of biological indicators. These indicators are specific plant species or varieties that are known to display symptoms when exposed to certain disease agents. Research at FPS has led to the replacement of biological indicators in grape, cherry, and rose with high throughput sequencing (HTS).

HTS provides an advantage because it gives a comprehensive picture of the entire microbial profile in a sample without prior knowledge of the pathogen. Many scientists have recognized the value of HTS, and there is a growing list of published research demonstrating its advantages over biological indicators. To replace biological indicators with HTS for regulatory testing requires thorough validation of diagnostic protocols after proving its advantages. Currently, FPS is engaged in strawberry and Rubus research comparing the efficacy of biological indicators to HTS. HTS is also employed in FPS's current research conducting a survey of viruses present in California strawberry nurseries, commercial fields, and native stands. The goal of the survey is to identify the viruses present in the production system, to inform certification and quarantine program priorities, as well as nursery best management practices.

More information about Foundation Plant Services can be found at the program website, www.fps.ucdavis.edu.

Strawberry

A snippet of what to expect from the NEW UC Eclipse series coming to the market early 2025...

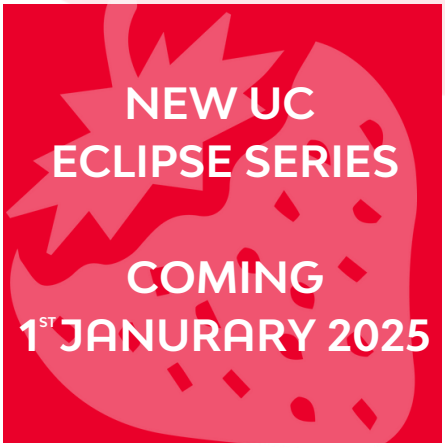
Rupert Hargreaves

5 new strawberry varieties will enter the international stage from 1st January 2025, 3 day neutral and 2 short day. The 5 varieties are already creating a huge demand for plants in California from the state's grower base.
All 5 varieties have resistance to Fusarium wilt which is devasting strawberry plantations in many parts of the world particularly now soil sterilants are becoming extinct.

There are 2 short-day varieties UC Surfline and UC Monarch. UC Surfline is looking very early in its production cycle and UC Monarch looks particularly useful for machine harvesting. Long truss length with well-displayed fruits.

The 3-day neutrals UC Eclipse, UC Golden Gate and UC Keystone all have slightly different attributes but all carry improved fruit quality and improvements in yields with commercial crops of UC Eclipse producing in excess of 4.5 kg per plant. In addition to this, we are expecting to see these day neutrals used for season extension where internationally the day-neutral market continues to take more market share year on year.

More on the NEW UC Eclipse Series will be announced in the November Edition of the GPG Times.
Stay tuned...



Stay tuned to GPG social channels for updates...

Celebrating Innovation in Soft Fruit Breeding: Highlights from James Hutton and GPG's Summer Events

Marketing & Communications

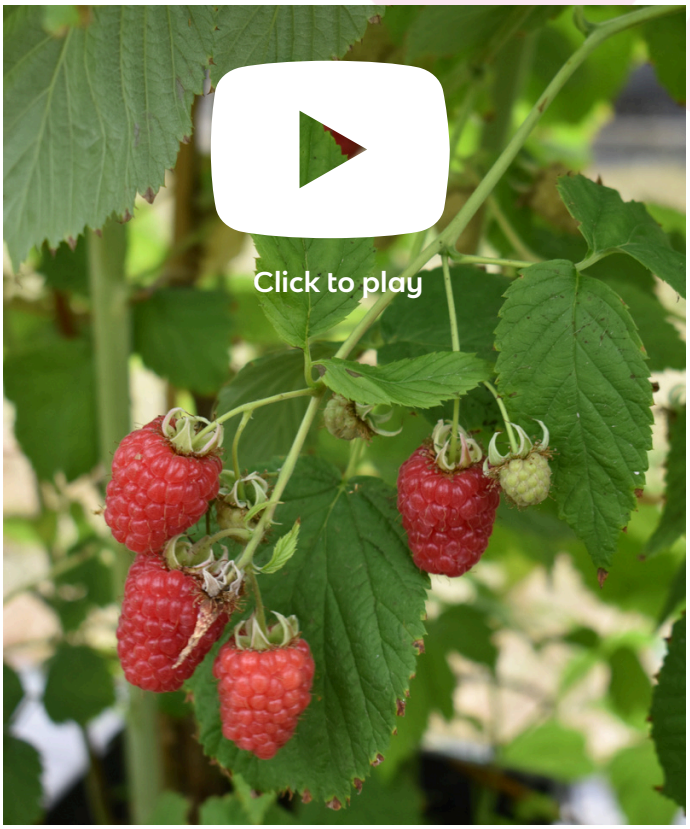
Every July, the team at James Hutton, our esteemed raspberry breeding partners, host their highly anticipated 'Fruit For The Future' event. This gathering is a showcase of cutting-edge research and development in the soft fruit breeding sector, featuring not only raspberries but also other crops such as potatoes and barley.

In collaboration with James Hutton, GPG (Global Plant Genetics) hosted a 'Raspberry Focus Afternoon'. This event highlighted all the raspberry varieties represented by GPG, bred by James Hutton. Known for bringing only the best genetics and varieties to the market, GPG let the exceptional quality of these crops speak for themselves. The event drew international visitors eager to see the raspberry series first hand.

A major highlight of the Raspberry Focus Afternoon was the introduction of the new raspberry variety, Glen Eden, which is set to launch soon and has already sparked significant interest.

NEW Glen Eden

https://youtu.be/E772K60cpAs



The event was dedicated to emphasizing the research and detail that go into producing first-class raspberry varieties, from initial selection to market introduction. This continuous research and development process spans the entire supply chain, ensuring that clients and licence holders benefit from the best possible genetics.

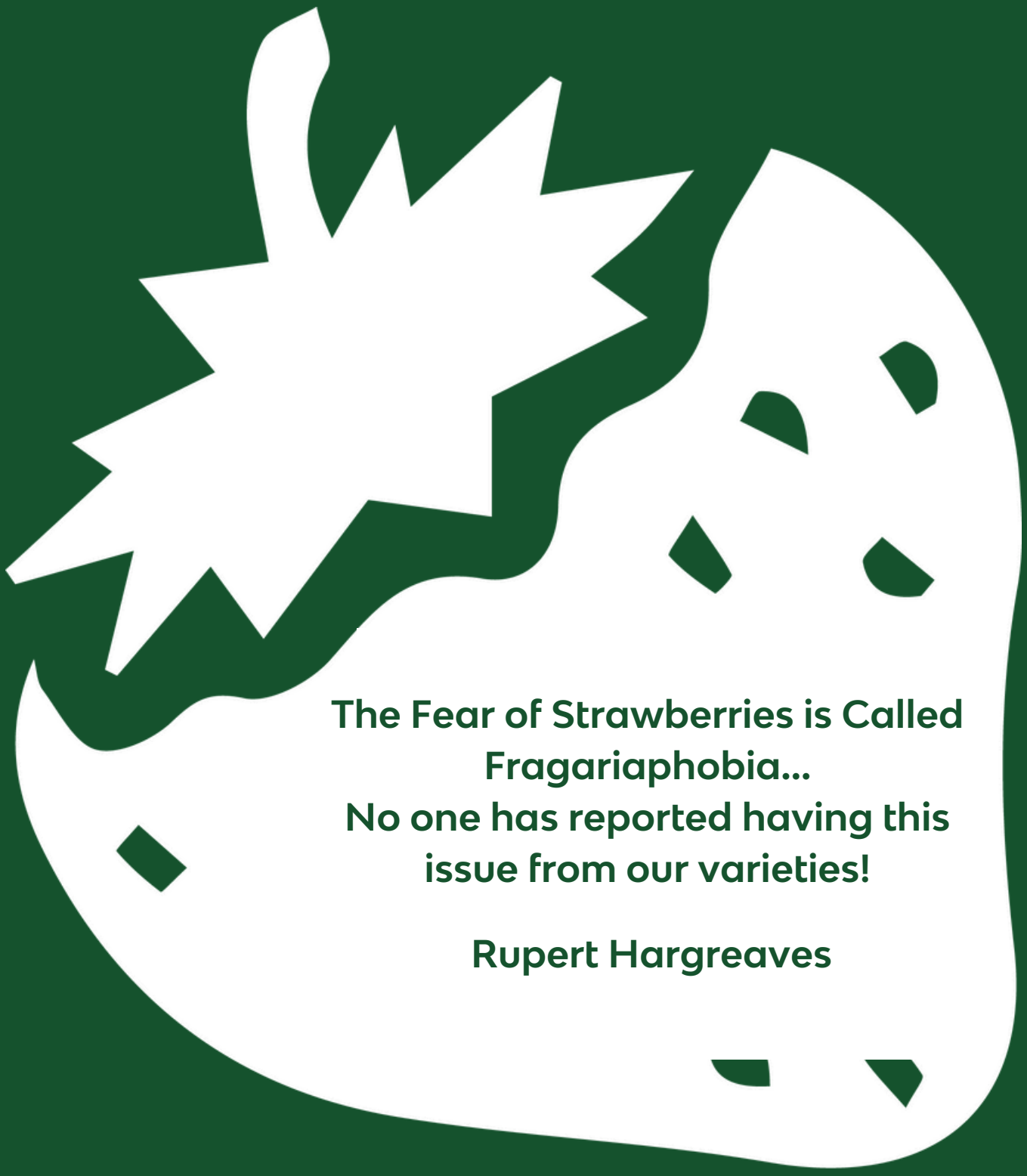
The launch of Glen Eden adds a remarkable new option to our raspberry portfolio, reinforcing our commitment to advancing the global raspberry market. Throughout the afternoon, all showcased GPG raspberries exceeded expectations in terms of fruit load, berry size, colour, texture, firmness, and, most importantly, flavour.

The following day, the James Hutton 'Fruit For The Future' event continued, highlighting their extensive contributions to both horticulture and agriculture. It was a pleasure to participate alongside JHL and the Fruit For The Future team, as well as our international guests.

A huge thank you goes out to the entire team at James Hutton for their efforts in organising the GPG Raspberry Focus Afternoon and the Fruit For The Future event. We also extend our thanks to all our visitors.

For more information on the raspberry varieties represented by GPG, please contact us at solutions@globalplantgenetics.com or visit our contact page at globalplantgenetics.com/contact

AND FINALLY...



The Fear of Strawberries is Called Fragariaphobia...
No one has reported having this issue from our varieties!

Rupert Hargreaves

Connect with us!