

Earliest Harvest & Strong Yields

Jamie Petchell

Spain & Morocco

Tropical Blue is delivering one of the earliest blueberry harvests seen this season in Spain and Morocco, placing it among the earliest commercially available varieties for Mediterranean production. Growers report significantly advanced ripening compared to standard early-season cultivars, offering a valuable market advantage at a time when global supply remains limited.

The variety maintains its strong reputation for fruit quality, producing large, firm, and uniformly sized berries with consistent flavour and reliable postharvest performance.

Early packouts indicate excellent Class 1 percentages.

Yield results are also promising. At just 2.5 years of age, commercial plantings are forecast to produce around 6 kg of Class 1 fruit per plant, highlighting the cultivar's strong productive potential even at a young stage.

Tropical Blue's combination of ultra-early timing, high quality, and strong yields is positioning it as a compelling new option for early-season blueberry programmes.



Coronda, Argentina

66th Fiesta Nacional De La Frutilla - Main Sponsors

Rupert Hargreaves



Global Plant Genetics were the main sponsors of the 66th Fiesta Nacional de la Frutilla in Coronda, Santa Fe, one of the main strawberry growing regions in Argentina. The three-day event started with an afternoon of technical presentations hosted by GPG, where we were supported by Isaac Rainwater and Glenn Cole from the University of California, Davis.

Glenn gave an in-depth presentation on varieties he feels will have a great opportunity in Argentina. Isaac also gave a presentation on the strawberry breeding programme at UC Davis, both past and present.



Rupert Hargreaves updated the audience on GPG's position in Argentina and throughout Latin America, emphasising that while we manage all the legacy varieties bred by UC Davis, the focus is on the replacements for Fronteras and San Andreas. Rupert highlighted that the new varieties are confidently being trialled, with commercial plans in place in each country. The emphasis was on UC Surflin, UC Eclipse and UC Golden Gate from the new UC Eclipse Series,

as well as UCD Royal Royce and UCD Moxie from the UCD Royal Royce Series.

Viveros Altus highlighted and gave an overview of their nursery developments in Argentina.



There were 200 people present at the event, including leading growers, nurseries, consultants, government officials and representatives from major banks. Georgina Losada, Santa Fe's Foreign Trade Secretary, offered great support to the event and gave an enlightening presentation on the region and the importance of agriculture. The presentation discussed the significance of the development work GPG is doing in the region, supporting new varieties that are likely to add increased value to local growers and the wider economy.

The event is famous across Argentina, highlighting the importance of strawberry production in the Santa Fe region, where it employs a large number of people and offers significant economic value. The event was attended by approximately 16,000 people over the three days.

Argentina, Patagonia

66th Fiesta Nacional De La Frutilla - Main Sponsors

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Watch the UCD Strawberry 30 second overview here...

Following the event, Rupert visited nursery production in El Maitén, Patagonia, with Laureano Delarmelina and Juan and Ángel Vilar from Viveros Altus. El Maitén is one of the two main strawberry plant propagation areas in Argentina. The deep, rich soils and abundance of high-quality water lend themselves very well to the production of high-quality field-grown plants.

The strawberry industry is very excited about the prospects of the new varieties, which offer opportunities to more than double the current yields achieved by San Andreas, with significant improvements in fruit quality. In the short-day market, Fronteras has dominated for some time, and the excitement surrounding UC Surfline for the future is high on everyone's mind.

It feels as though Argentina is entering one of the most exciting stages of development the strawberry industry has seen there for many years.



India's Blueberry Potential Becoming Increasingly Clear

Jamie Petchell



Abhishek Rao, Jamie Petchell, Bokam Sriram

During my recent trip to India, I was able to see just how quickly interest in commercial blueberry production is growing. Although India is still a very small producer globally, it is evident to us at GPG that the country has exceptional long-term potential. With nearly 1.5 billion people and a middle class of roughly 500 million, the opportunity for both production and consumption is enormous.

A key theme of the trip was the role of high-quality genetics. Through our partnership with the University of Georgia, we are now introducing UGA blueberry varieties into India via FD Berries. Maverick is already in propagation, with Tropical Blue, Sweet Duchess and Gladiator soon to follow - varieties designed for warm climates and well suited to Indian growing conditions.



Much of my visit was spent with our partners at FD Berries, who continue to make impressive progress. We also met with a number of existing and prospective growers exploring blueberries for the first time, and their focus on learning and doing things correctly from the outset was extremely encouraging.



Jamie Petchell, Satheesh Rao

TROPICAL BLUE



SWEET DUCHESS



GLADIATOR



MAVERICK



With strong genetics, suitable production systems and improvements in cold-chain logistics, India has every opportunity to build a dynamic domestic blueberry industry. The momentum is real, and this market is one to watch very closely.

Grapes - Strengthening Strategy & Innovation

UC Davis & Partners Meet in France



Luis Antonio Diaz Garcia - UCD Breeder, Olivier Zekri - Mercier Group, Javier Provedo - Provedo
Claire Donkin - GPG, Julien Lалу - Mercier Group, Alagnacio Provedo - Provedo

Claire Donkin

On July 15–16, representatives from UC Davis, Global Plant Genetics, and key European licensing partners gathered in western France for a collaborative visit focused on commercial strategy, research alignment, and next-generation grapevine development.

UC Davis breeder Luis Antonio Diaz, accompanied by Claire Donkin of Global Plant Genetics, met with French licensee Mercier at their Novatech facility. They were joined by our Spanish licensees Javier and Alagnacio Provedo, bringing together a truly industry leading combination of nursery expertise, market knowledge, and technical leadership.

The visit began with a round-table discussion and commercial presentations, followed by discussions on business planning and commercialisation pathways across territories. A key focus of the visit was the progress of the GRN 1 and GRN 3 rootstocks, the UC Davis Pierce Disease-resistant grapevines currently in trial, and the ongoing grape fan leaf virus-related research programme.



The group also toured Mercier's cutting-edge trial and production facilities, which demonstrated a high level of technical capability across plant multiplication, grafting methods, disease susceptibility screening, and VATE and DUS trial support. The calibre of the facilities and the practical innovations being deployed provided a valuable platform for discussion and knowledge exchange.

Beyond technical evaluation, the visit offered an opportunity to share both commercial and technical insights and future plans. The exchange of expertise among the teams proved invaluable, helping refine future direction and align priorities for the UC Davis grape portfolio across Europe.

The day concluded with a wine tasting in Mercier's cellar, followed by further networking over dinner in La Rochelle. Additional discussions continued the next morning, ensuring clarity on next steps.

The visit left the group energised, aligned, and confident in the exciting opportunities ahead. With coordinated strategy, world-class trial infrastructure, and highly skilled partners, the UC Davis grapevine programme is well positioned for impactful growth across Europe. We're looking forward to showcasing these exciting genetics across the European wine industry.



Traditional locations with increasing berry advancements

📍 Poland, Serbia

Jamie Petchell



During the month of October, I took the opportunity to travel to Poland and Serbia in order to meet with GPG clients: longstanding, new and potential. On the Polish leg, Soufiane joined me as we drove many hundreds of kilometres across its expanding network of high-quality roads.

In terms of berry production, there are many similarities between the two countries. Both have traditionally been known as some of the largest global players in berry production for the processing industry. A lot of this continues to the present day, but we are now seeing a rapid expansion in high-tech growing systems to produce berries for the fresh sector both at home and for export.



NEW variety - Launching soon

Kusibab Wyka

Marcin Wyka and Aleksandra Kusibab-Wyka are doing sterling work to develop the new range of blueberry selections from the Oregon Blueberry programme that we represent. These include high chill, low chill and next generation hexaploids with 4 new varieties to be named and launched very shortly. Their nursery, based just north of Krakow in Poland, is handling the multiplication, production and distribution of these exciting new genetics.

We have been working closely with our friends at Zeleni Hit in Serbia for several years now as they bring improved varieties to market in their home country. Our collaboration to date has focused on the Rubus species, including the Skye, Glen Dee and Glen Mor raspberry varieties as well as Natchez, Ouachita and Von blackberries. These cultivars are helping local growers to elevate the standards of berries on the shelves and in the freezers of Serbian and European supermarkets.

Zeleni Hit



Lewis Raspberry

High quality nursery plant production is also evident in these countries with top specification potted plants of the four main berry species now available in increasing volumes. These plants are being supplied across Europe and even further afield.

Climate change is another important aspect in these parts of Europe. In some parts of Serbia for example, winters are becoming significantly less harsh than in the past. With this in mind, it will be important for growers to select varieties with even more care as they attempt to future proof their growing operations. One potential change on the horizon is in blueberry production where there are now opportunities for medium chill varieties to compete with and potentially replace more traditional high chill blueberry plantations.

We are highly expectant that both Poland and Serbia will continue to develop their berry production apace, solidifying their position as key players in the global industry.

Blueberries, Blackberries, Raspberries & Strawberries in Serbia

Nevena Batić - Zeleni Hit



Our close collaboration with Global Plant Genetics has been very fruitful in the last number of years. We are delighted by their professional approach and knowledge-sharing from the whole team and above all, Jamie's personal faith and enthusiastic overview of our future plans for the market development.

We are very pleased with the results in the new blackberry assortment, especially with varieties Natchez and moreover, the club variety Von, which became a true hit in the Serbian hypermarket chains in the past year. The Von brand influence, in addition to our zero-residue production concept, is growing and maintaining a strong position. This is due to Von's premium quality, shiny and large fruits, and its outstanding taste and absolute consumer experience. Natchez is without doubt, the most early variety there is for our climatic region, with elongated, big and attractive fruits.

In the raspberry sector, we are thrilled to have discovered the double-cropping variety Skye, which is a real refreshment to the fresh-raspberry market. The high-commercial value of this variety relies on the firmness, shelf-life, consistently large size and high yield, as well as its flavour, appealing fruits and phenomenal performance.

We are currently performing trials with new day-neutral strawberry varieties which will fulfill the year-round cropping system with high yield, premium quality fruits for the most challenging and demanding markets.

The biggest improvement we expect is in the blueberry world, with breeding and selection of varieties with low-chill requirements and especially new hexaploid types, while remaining their extraordinary flavour profiles and excellent shelf life and yield.



Glen Dee raspberry is excellent for summer production, harvesting in the most delicate part of the year, the second half of July and August, depending on altitude. It has high yields of large and conical fruits with excellent colour under high UV irradiation levels.

We are eager to improve and develop in the berry fruit sector and to face the future challenges, which is why our partnership with GPG is of great importance in the years to come.



Nevena Batić, Jamie Petchell

I was amazed by what I saw this summer when visiting the breeding programme at Oregon Blueberry. Their new selections and varieties are really impressive. Based on the quality and performance of these genetics, I am very hopeful for the future cooperation between my nursery, GPG and Oregon Blueberry. The new varieties have the potential to revolutionise blueberry cultivation in our various markets for plant material.

Aleksandra - Kusibab-Wyka



OREGON
BLUEBERRY



Future Planting Plans

Asparagus

The autumn season in Europe signals the time for asparagus growers and nurseries to consider their future planting plans.

These might be plug plants for the following spring or indeed, crowns for the year after. At GPG, we are proud to represent the high-quality green asparagus breeding programme at Fox Seeds in Ontario, Canada.

Varieties from this programme such as Guelph Equinox and Guelph Millennium are well renowned for their combination of industry leading spear quality and yields in cool and temperate growing environments.

Seeds of these hybrids, as well as Guelph Eclipse, are available to order now with deliveries to take place in spring 2026.

If you need more information on these or other asparagus varieties in our range, please contact Izabela on izabela@globalplantgenetics.com



Guelph Millennium



Guelph Equinox

Personal Spotlight: From Geneva to Nice

Jamie Petchell



During the month of September, I was lucky enough to have taken part in a 4-day cycling event from Geneva in Switzerland to Nice on the south coast of France. The trip was organised by Discover Adventure, a UK-based travel company.

Along the way, I got to meet new cycling friends - Didier, Mark and Mark.

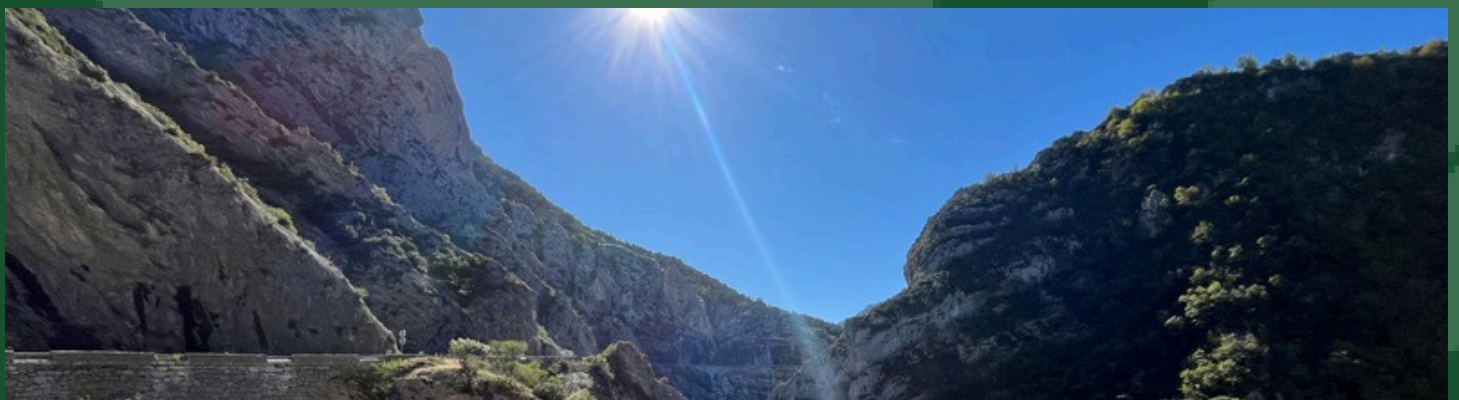


We were wonderfully supported by Andy and were blessed with some excellent weather on all but one afternoon. The cycling was challenging but fun with outstanding scenery, landscapes and some excellent food. I've always been a fan of cycling and I particularly enjoy these types of event as they allow me to see new places and meet new people.

This one was especially exciting as on day one, we got to ride through and stop for lunch in Annecy where I spent three weeks on my French language exchange when I was at school.

In addition, there are fewer better places to finish a long bike ride than the Mediterranean in the south of France.

I'd highly recommend it to any keen cyclist out there!



UC Disease-Resistance Ratings

Ratings from the UCD Strawberry Disease Nursery 2016-2025

Cultivar	FUS	MAC	VER	PHY	NPT*
Chandler	4.0	4.7	2.8	NA	2.2
Albion	4.2	4.7	3.3	2.4	3.6
Cabrillo	4.0	4.3	2.8	1.9	4.0
Fronteras	1.4	4.2	2.7	2.4	2.5
Portola	2.1	4.3	3.4	1.6	3.0
Monterey	3.3	4.4	2.8	2.4	2.7
San_Andreas	1.1	4.8	NA	1.3	2.5
UCD_Finn	4.5	5.0	2.8	2.8	3.8
UCD_Mojo	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.4	3.1
UCD_Moxie	1.8	4.5	2.6	2.7	2.8
UCD_Royal_Royce	3.6	3.6	2.6	2.4	3.1
UCD_Valiant	3.3	4.0	2.6	2.2	1.9
UCD_Victor	1.4	4.3	3.0	1.9	2.1
UCD_Warrior	1.1	2.7	2.6	1.8	1.7
UC_Eclipse	1.2	3.8	2.6	2.3	3.7
UC_Golden_Gate	1.7	4.0	2.7	2.5	2.7
UC_Keystone	1.3	3.9	2.4	2.3	1.0
UC_Monarch	1.3	2.2	2.0	1.8	3.0
UC_Surflin	1.0	3.1	1.5	1.4	1.7

*ratings on a 1-5 scale

We're also pleased to share the newly released disease-resistance ratings from the University of California, Davis - Strawberry Breeding Team. This updated dataset provides valuable insight for upcoming planting decisions and highlights how the latest UC varieties continue to advance in field reliability and resilience.

Notably, UC Surflin shows excellent resistance to key pathogens - including Neopestalotiopsis (NPT), Fusarium, Verticillium Wilt, and Phytophthora - underscoring its strength in high-pressure environments. These improvements represent meaningful progress for growers aiming to maximise performance and reduce disease-related risk across the season.



For more information please feel free to reach out to Rupert - if you'd like to discuss how these findings may benefit your nursery or production plans for the coming season.

rupert@globalplantgenetics.com



Jordan British Business Council Launch

Rupert Hargreaves

It was a privilege to be invited to the Jordanian Embassy this week for the launch of the Jordan British Business Council (JBBC).

Working with Abdallah Al Tayeh and his team at Ayla in Jordan has been an incredible journey so far. Seeing the development of some of the world's best strawberry varieties being produced in Jordan and plants of those varieties exported through the Gulf states clearly demonstrates what can be achieved.

The JBBC has been formed to help companies in both countries, a very inspirational move.

We look forward to expanding our activities in Jordan and throughout the region...



AND FINALLY...

The average person in the USA eats 300
- 700 blueberries per year
VS

The average person in the UK 150 - 350
(that's half a blueberry a day!)

Eloise McDowell

Connect with us!

