

# The World's Largest Strawberry Market

Rupert Hargreaves

 **China**

During March 2025, China hosted the 10th International Strawberry Symposium in Yancheng, attracting many of the world's best scientists and industry leaders.

Strawberry production in China now covers approximately 133000 hectares, the vast majority of which is short-day production. The emphasis is on producing sweet tasting strawberries with a brix of 13+, little acid and less concern on shelf life and yield.

The presentation of the fruit for retail sales is of the highest global standard, with berries placed individually in specific-shaped packaging more akin to a box of chocolates.



There is a rising demand for white and blush coloured strawberries, fitting the same fruit quality specification.

The number of young people entering the strawberry industry from world-class universities is both evident and admirable, helping secure a bright future for the industry and its continued development.

Monterey from the University of California, Davis - dominates the day neutral market, although by comparison to their short day variety Benehope, it has a small surface area.

GPG's licensed partners in China are doing a great job at both nursery level and fruit market development. With NEW varieties protected there, with our legal team and strong integrated partnerships in place, we are excited by the future opportunities.



# The University of California Davis



The University of California, Davis — a leader in the development of world-class strawberry varieties for the California and global markets – and Eurosemillas, S.A. — a leading agricultural company and plant developer based in Córdoba, Spain — have amicably agreed that Eurosemillas will no longer serve as the master licensee for UC Davis strawberries. The parties thank each other for their multi-decade relationship bringing UC Davis strawberries to all parts of the world.

<https://www.ucdavis.edu/news/uc-davis-and-international-strawberry-master-licensee-eurosemillas-agree-part-ways-0>

## GPG “Excited & Honoured”

### Global Plant Genetics

Global Plant Genetics is “excited and honoured” according to Rupert Hargreaves to be representing The University of California, Davis as International Master Licences holder for all patented strawberry varieties in most parts of the world.

The legacy varieties such as San Andreas and Monterey are dominant in many international markets with new higher yielding, better tasting, firmer varieties now entering the market such as UCD Royal Royce  
UCD Victor  
UC Surfline  
UC Eclipse plus a whole lot more...

Technical descriptions of each can be seen [www.globalplantgenetics.com](http://www.globalplantgenetics.com)



# In the Field: Oxnard, California

## New UC Davis Strawberry Varieties Shine

Rupert Hargreaves

Oxnard, California – April 2025

A crowd gathered for the much-anticipated Short-Day Strawberry Field Day hosted by the University of California, Davis Strawberry Breeding Program this April. The event, held in the heart of California's strawberry-growing region, spotlighted two new short-day varieties: UC Surflin and UC Monarch.

These latest innovations are the work of Professor Steve Knapp and his team at UC Davis, whose breeding efforts continue to shape the future of the short-day strawberry market. For years, this market has been led by older varieties like Fronteras, but newer contenders such as UCD Víctor have gained traction thanks to their high productivity, consistent quality, and excellent shelf life.

Now, UC Surflin and UC Monarch promise to further elevate industry standards - offering growers disease resistance, improved shelf life, and higher yields.

### UC Surflin: A Strong Start to the Season

UC Surflin is an early-season short-day variety that delivers firm fruit and high early yields, with harvests extending well into the season. It boasts impressive post-harvest qualities and strong resistance to key diseases, including Phytophthora and Fusarium, with moderate resistance to Neopestalotiopsis. In field trials, both yield and fruit firmness exceeded that of Fronteras.

***"UC Surflin stands out as a highly competitive variety due to its strong resistance to important diseases such as Neopestalotiopsis, Fusarium, and Phytophthora. It also delivers excellent yields, making it a very attractive option for growers seeking both sustainability and productivity."***



**FORTALEZA**

[– Kelly Mendoza, Commercial Director at Fresa Fortaleza, Master License Holder – Mexico](#)



### UC Monarch: Performance Across the Season

UC Monarch delivers not only early yields but also robust performance throughout the full season. Its fruit is firm, flavourful, and offers a long shelf life with enhanced aroma. This variety is resistant to Neopestalotiopsis and Fusarium, and moderately resistant to Phytophthora and Verticillium. It is well-suited for both mechanical harvest and substrate culture systems, making it an ideal choice for modern strawberry production.

***"UC Monarch is a short-day variety that has shown outstanding performance in coastal regions like San Quintín, Baja California. In line with the UC Davis standard, it offers exceptional flavor and strong resistance to diseases such as Neopestalotiopsis. In an ever-changing agricultural landscape, varieties like UC Monarch provide growers with confidence, stability, and added value."***

*– Kelly Mendoza, Commercial Director at Fresa Fortaleza, Master License Holder – Mexico*

Looking Ahead - Both UC Surflin and UC Monarch are now licensed to nurseries internationally. While initial plant volumes are limited, production is ramping up to meet growing demand. These two new additions signal a bright future for the short-day segment, bringing innovation, resilience, and improved fruit quality to growers around the globe.

To see the UC Eclipse Series in action visit

[youtube.com/globalplantgenetics](https://youtube.com/globalplantgenetics)



# Low-Chill Blueberries Continue to Excel

Jamie Petchell

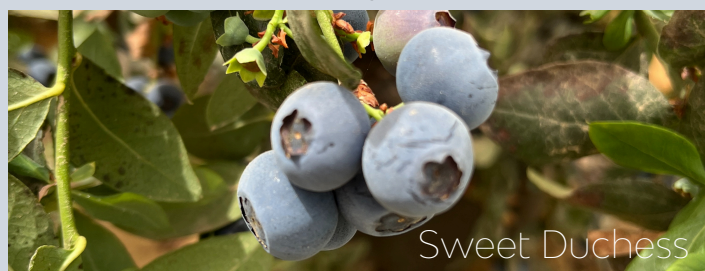


As the early-season for low-chill blueberries in the Northern Hemisphere is drawing to a close, now is a great time to reflect on varietal performance over the 2025 season. We have been lucky enough to visit blueberry producers in all major growing Continents of the crop in the Northern Hemisphere so far this year. During these visits, we have been very excited to witness the superb performance of our full range of low-chill blueberry genetics. Early season types include Tropical Blue and Sweet Duchess moving into the early / mid and fully mid-season types such as Gladiator and Maverick. Each of these varieties is excelling in its window of production and particular market segment.

Tropical Blue, in many regions, is showing an unrivalled combination of early production and excellent yields of high-quality berries in the early harvest and supply windows. It is naturally very early due to both its very low-chill nature and the reduced time from flowering to fruit production. Growers in Spain, in particular, now exercise pruning and tipping techniques that concentrate the ripening of the crop. This means that a very high proportion of the berries are harvested in the first two picks and it has the other significant benefit of reducing picking costs. Both of these aspects are highly attractive as fruit can be supplied to markets when return prices to the grower are strong and at a time, in general globally, when labour costs are increasing. Plantings of the variety are predicted to appreciably increase consistently in the next few years.

Sweet Duchess has always been characterised for its

premium quality berries and this trait has once again been in evidence in the early 2025 season. Generally ripening just after Tropical Blue, Sweet Duchess has very large, firm and sweet berries. These fruits are ideal for growers that supply top-tier markets as this level of fruit quality is relatively rare so early in the supply season. The berries of Sweet Duchess have a perfect combination of sweetness and firmness and this makes the cultivar really stand out.



The Gladiator variety can be managed for production in either the early / mid or full mid-season. This comes down to the correct employment of pruning techniques. It is not unusual to see growers using different methods in order to prolong the harvest season of the variety. We have heard Gladiator described as "the best all-round blueberry variety in the world". This is high praise indeed but is borne out of its outstanding fruit quality and yields. The fruit of Gladiator shows no weaknesses; it is a very large fruit with superlative flavour, an excellent bite and wonderful flavour with a first-rate sugar : acid balance. Gladiator is one of those rare examples of a berry variety that is genuinely grower and retailer friendly, satisfying the most important aspects of all parts of the blueberry supply chain.

# Low-Chill Blueberries Continue to Excel



The interest in Maverick is growing year on year.

In addition to these established low-chill blueberry varieties, we have also spent a good deal of time this spring evaluating new selections. We are excited to report that the future pipeline of varieties is very exciting and we look forward to sharing more information on the next generation of low-chill types in the near future.

Blueberry production in warmer growing regions globally is continuing to develop in a positive way and we are privileged to be playing our part in this evolutionary process by bringing to market improved genetics for growers, retailer and consumers alike.

Maverick, already well-renowned for its industry-leading yields, continues to exceed expectations. This past season has been the first time that we have seen the variety fruiting in some parts of Asia and North Africa. In both of these areas, not only have we witnessed its already proven precocity, but we have also tasted larger and sweeter berries than in other production regions.

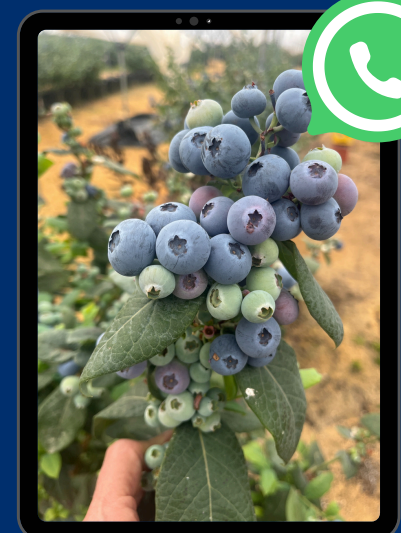
Maverick has always had the ability to yield in excess of 4kgs / plant one year after planting. This remains the case in new locations and we are now seeing more mature plantations producing over 6kgs a further year down the road. Fruit quality remains excellent with a berry size of 18-20mm that is consistent throughout the harvest period and with very good flavour and firmness profiles.



**Ready to join this blueberry evolution?**  
**Become part of the journey here -**

**For exclusive updates, videos & insights...**

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VabYeHJEAkWACald1S09>



# A Taste Sensation - Von Blackberry Harvest Season Arrives in Serbia



We're excited to share that the Von blackberry is now being harvested in Serbia, with our licence holders capturing some fantastic photos, seen here in late May.

Known for its amazing taste, Von is continuing to prove itself as a standout variety. The fruits are impressively consistent, averaging 12 grams each, and it takes just 9-11 berries to fill a punnet – a testament to both the size and quality of the berries.

Nebojsa Momirovic - [Zeleni Hit](#)



This early-season performance in Serbia highlights Von's potential across a wide range of growing conditions.

Keep an eye out for more updates as the season progresses on our YouTube - [youtube.com/globalplantgenetics](https://youtube.com/globalplantgenetics).

## Driving Digital & AI Growth at GPG

Eloise McDowell

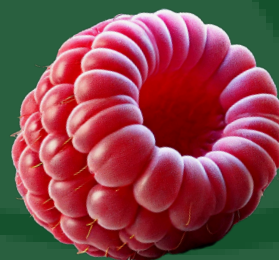
In today's fast-moving world, technology is evolving at an incredible pace. Staying ahead both as individuals and as an organisation - requires continuous learning, adaptability, and a proactive mindset.

At GPG, one of our core business values is leadership, whether that's leading in the right direction, thought leadership, or department leadership. We believe that being at the forefront of knowledge drives success and strengthens development, both within our company and across the industry.

As we continue to evolve, embracing digital advancements and investing in training has always been part of our journey. Now, as Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes a major topic of discussion worldwide, we have taken the opportunity to expand our expertise even further by completing an AI in Business course.

We're thrilled to share that our team has successfully completed advanced AI training, equipping us with the tools to stay ahead in innovation, particularly within horticulture and our business sector.

This investment in skills and technology isn't just about keeping up—it's about driving real growth and transformation.



By embedding AI-driven knowledge into our operations, we're strengthening relationships, communication, efficiency, and success—all while continuing to lead in our industry.

Watch this space - exciting things are on the horizon.

# Royal Royce: An excellent Strawberry cultivar in Brazil



Royal Royce belongs to a new group of cultivars that aim to establish new standards of productivity and fruit quality. As a car enthusiast, I often use that industry as a reference to explain how things work in the “real world.” When you see, for example, a Toyota car for sale, you already assume it’s a good vehicle — even without seeing it up close. What catches your attention is the brand, recognized for decades as a synonym of reliability. Only afterward do you check if the car is really in good condition.

The same reasoning applies to other brands, such as Honda, just to name another example. Following this logic, over the past 30 years, the strawberry cultivars that have stood out the most in Brazil and worldwide were developed by the University of California, Davis. Varieties such as Oso Grande, Camarosa, Chandler, Aromas, Albion, and San Andreas — the latter being almost a national consensus.



And why is that? Because this cultivar stands out for its hardiness, productivity, and excellent adaptability to different planting regions.

Breeders — specialists responsible for developing new varieties — already have, at the very least, a group of cultivars gradually replacing San Andreas. One of the most promising is Royal Royce.

During a visit to a producer in southern Brazil, who has more than 300,000 plants planted, about 12,000 of which are Royal Royce, we were impressed by the performance of this material. According to the producer himself, he is safely harvesting about 50% more with Royal Royce compared to San Andreas. No matter how good the photos are, they can’t fully convey the potential of this cultivar.

## **Here are some characteristics of Royal Royce compared to San Andreas:**

- Larger and more robust crowns;
- Reduced runner production;
- More consistent yield, with continuous flowering and fruiting. These fruits have a conical shape — which facilitates packaging — and a bright red color that remains even after harvest;
- High resistance to long-distance transport, resulting in fewer losses;
- Lower susceptibility to mite attacks;
- Good resistance to major diseases and lower nutrient requirements compared to San Andreas...



...Another observation made at the Maxxi Mudas experimental unit is that, even under high temperatures, Royal Royce continues to produce flowers, while San Andreas tends to temporarily pause flowering. In other words, it's like a car that goes further on less fuel.

*Heitor Antônio Pagnan – Agronomist Engineer and Co-owner of Maxxi Mudas*  
*Gabriela Pagnan – Business Operations Manager*

Evolution and innovation are constantly knocking at our door. For this reason, Maxxi Mudas is committed to bringing cultivars to Brazil that help increase producers' profitability. Royal Royce is an excellent example of this evolution!

[www.moranginhos.com.br](http://www.moranginhos.com.br)



## NEW Blackberry Varieties Juhas & Maryna

### Juhas

A primocane-fruiting variety (repeats fruiting on current-year canes).

The shrubs have an upright habit, medium growth, and stiff, thornless canes. It produces many root suckers and is characterized by small, upward-curved leaves.

Fruiting on two-year-old canes begins in late June, while fruiting on current-year canes starts in early September. The yield from two-year-old canes is higher compared to the yield from current-year canes (total yield approx. 2 kg/plant). The fruits are well exposed, forming on about one-third of the current-year cane, and detach easily from the stem.

Fruits have an average weight (from current-year canes: 6.3 to 7.0 g; from two-year-old canes: 4.5 to 4.8 g), are glossy, very tasty, and sweet (soluble solids content: 13.6–14.1 °Brix).

The variety is highly resistant to cane diseases.



### Maryna

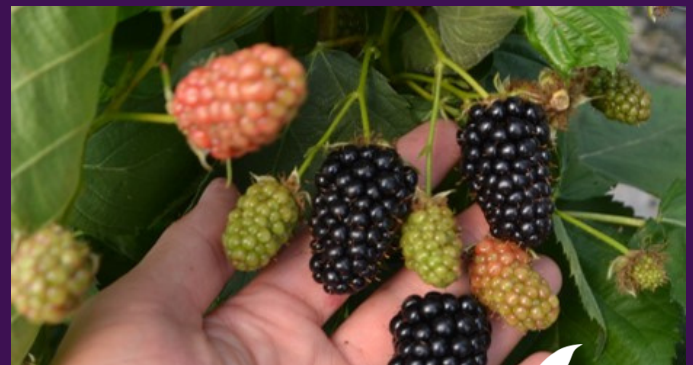
A primocane-fruiting variety (repeats fruiting on current-year canes).

The shrubs are medium-sized, upright, with thornless canes and medium-sized, upward-curved leaves.

Fruiting on two-year-old canes begins in late June, and on current-year canes in early September. The yield from two-year-old canes is higher than from one-year-old canes. The fruits are well exposed along the two-year-old cane and at the tip of the current-year cane, which makes harvesting easy.

The average fruit weight on current-year canes ranges from 8.6 to 10.3 g, and from 6 to 8.5 g on two-year-old canes. The fruits are firm, glossy, sweet, and very tasty (soluble solids content: 11–13 °Brix).

The variety is resistant to cane diseases.



Katarzyna Król-Dyrek  
<http://www.niwabrzezna.pl/>



# Growing Together: Personal Development at GPG

Eloise McDowell

At GPG, we believe that when our people grow, our business grows too.

This lies at the heart of our company culture and reflects one of GPG's core values with personal and professional development. We recognise that investing in our people is not just the right thing to do, it's essential to achieving our vision of becoming the No.1 IP company within our product portfolio.



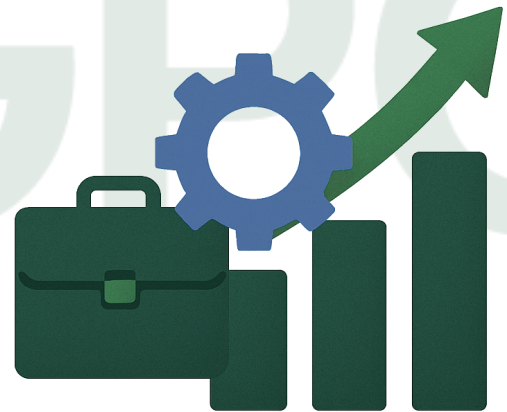
Personal development at GPG isn't a tick-box exercise. It's an ongoing commitment to nurturing skills, empowering careers, and fostering a culture of curiosity, learning, innovation and leadership. By encouraging employees to evolve, we ensure the business grows stronger, more agile, and future-ready.

At GPG, development isn't one-size-fits-all. Our approach is diverse and forward-thinking, ensuring that every employee has access to opportunities that match their goals and our shared vision.

**AI Training and Development** - With artificial intelligence reshaping industries globally, GPG has embraced AI training to help teams streamline processes, enhance decision-making, and drive smarter business operations. These sessions are designed to demystify AI, highlight its practical uses, and equip employees with the skills needed to leverage technology in their daily roles.

**Help To Grow Management Programme** - One of our employees recently completed the Help To Grow Management course, with another employee previously completing the course - an intensive business development initiative. This programme focused on understanding GPG's core strengths, identifying future opportunities, and developing strategies for digital adoption and innovation. From exploring new market potential to refining what makes GPG unique, the course plays a key role in driving long-term productivity and sustainable growth.

**Mentorship Programme** - In recent weeks, we have had employees connect and join a mentorship programme, which connects experienced leaders from third parties across businesses, with employees. This one-to-one support provides a safe space for sharing experiences, gaining guidance, and shaping career paths. Whether someone is stepping into a new role or looking to broaden their impact, mentorship plays a pivotal role in helping people thrive.



Training and development at GPG are not just about courses, they're about building a culture where learning is part of everyday work. As we look towards the future, we'll continue to expand opportunities across departments, invest in high-impact learning, and listen to feedback to shape programmes that make a difference.

Together, we're building something bigger than a business. We're growing a community of skilled, empowered individuals who are ready to shape the future of GPG.

# AND FINALLY...

The strawberry is the UK's most popular fruit according to a [YouGov](#) survey.

91% of the population like the strawberry  
3% dislike  
6% neutral

"It can only improve with better quality varieties..."

Rupert Hargreaves

Connect with us!

