



Meteor Cherry



A new, very hardy variety of pie cherry developed at the Fruit Breeding Farm, Excelsior, Minnesota and introduced by the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Agricultural Experiment Station

Meteor Cherry¹

W. H. Alderman, W. G. Brierley, T. S. Weir, A. N. Wilcox, R. C. Blake,
K. W. Hanson, and L. C. Snyder²

Meteor (Minnesota No. 66) *Prunus cerasus*

THIS NEW CHERRY variety, together with Northstar introduced in 1950, makes cherry growing possible in Minnesota and other northern districts. Meteor is similar to the widely grown Montmorency in size, appearance, and quality. It follows in season the early ripening Northstar so that the two varieties cover a maturity period of at least three weeks.

History

In 1935 the well known Montmorency cherry was crossed with a very hardy, small fruited, medium dark red, unnamed cherry that had been obtained from the Dominion of Canada Agricultural Experiment Station, Morden, Manitoba.

Superintendent W. R. Leslie of the station had selected this cherry from seedlings grown from seed he had obtained from the late A. P. Stevenson of Morden. Mr. Stevenson in turn had been growing seedlings from the Russian varieties, Vladimir and Shubianca. Thus the male parent of Meteor had

been developed by repeated selections of Russian strains and probably represented the most winter hardy sour cherry stock available for American fruit breeders.

The variety first fruited in 1944 and attracted attention because of the large size of the fruits and the vigor of the tree. Since that year it has never failed to bloom and set a crop. In 1948 it carried a full crop when nearly all other cherry selections suffered heavily from winter injury to fruit buds. In 1952 the crop was reduced to about one half following a winter that produced unusually heavy injury to fruit buds of many stone fruits.

¹ The Department of Horticulture of the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station acknowledges the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture through its Division of Fruit and Vegetable Crops and Disease in the Minnesota fruit breeding project which is also a part of a national fruit breeding program. Through this cooperative arrangement, the part-time services of a federal agent are available to assist in the fruit breeding work in Minnesota.

² W. H. Alderman, Professor and Head, Department of Horticulture, and Superintendent, Fruit Breeding Farm.

W. G. Brierley, Professor of Horticulture.

T. S. Weir, Associate Professor of Horticulture and Assistant Superintendent, Fruit Breeding Farm.

A. N. Wilcox, Associate Professor of Horticulture.

R. C. Blake, Agent, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

K. W. Hanson, Agent, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

L. C. Snyder, Extension Horticulturist.

Description

The tree of Meteor is a strong and vigorous grower with an upright, moderately spreading habit. The unusually large leaves produce a dense and luxuriant foliage that is apparently highly resistant to leaf spot. Limited tests in northern Minnesota indicate that Meteor is hardier than Sapa cherry-plum and many of the commonly grown hybrid plums.

The fruit is large to very large, blocky roundish-oval, flattened at the

ends; apex is slightly depressed; cavity is medium in size; suture a faint line; stem medium in length and thickness. The fruit color is a very attractive clear light bright red; the skin is thin and tender. The flesh is a light bright yellow, medium firm, and medium juicy. The flavor is a pleasant mild acid, and quality is very good. The stone is small, long oval, and very free. The fruit ripens about a week to ten days later than Northstar or about midseason in relation to standard varieties of sour cherries.



Original tree of Meteor cherry.