

Summercrisp Pear

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Summercrisp is a cold-hardy, early-season pear (*Pyrus* sp.) that is being introduced by the University of Minnesota for use in cold climates, where most pear cultivars survive poorly and often do not fruit. This cultivar's name connotes its early harvest season. It also connotes the fact that the fruit are best consumed without having been ripened; the eating quality is highest while the flesh is firm and crisp.

The parentage of Summercrisp is unknown. It was received with several other seedlings at the University of Minnesota Fruit Breeding Farm (Horticultural Research Center), Excelsior, Minnesota, in 1933 from John Gaspard of Caledonia, Minnesota. Summercrisp was tested as Gaspard #5 or N33201 at Excelsior, Morris, and Grand Rapids, Minnesota, by the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station as well as at locations in several other states by cooperating state experiment stations. Based on field observations and laboratory freezing tests, this accession has been recognized for many years as one of the hardier pears in the University of Minnesota collection.

Summercrisp flowers annually. It blooms at the same time as Patten and Parker, two to four days earlier than Luscious. Summercrisp requires cross-pollination, but because it produces abundant, viable pollen, it should be useful as a hardy pollinizer for other pear cultivars.

The pyriform fruit of Summercrisp are borne on numerous spurs. The fruit are 3 to 4 inches long and 2½ to 3½ inches in diameter. They have prominent, red lenticels and a red blush over a green ground color. The fruit are ready to be harvested between August 10 and August 15 at Excelsior, Minnesota, approximately five weeks before those of Luscious, Parker, and Patten.



Fruit of Summercrisp pear

Summercrisp fruit should be refrigerated immediately after they are harvested, while the flesh is still firm and before any yellow color is apparent. They should not be allowed to ripen on or off the tree or else grit cells, a browning of the flesh around the seeds, and a strong aroma will become apparent. When they are consumed without having been ripened, the fruit have a crisp, juicy texture and a sweet, mild flavor. When harvested as described above, they have been stored in good condition for six weeks under refrigeration. Summercrisp is not desirable for canning because the grit cells become more detectable when the fruit are processed.

Mature trees of Summercrisp are 18 to 25 feet tall and exhibit a conical shape. The leaves are 2½ to 3½ inches long and 1½ to 2 inches wide with serrate margins. Their

upper surface is dark green and glossy; their lower surface, gray and dull. One-year-old wood, which is dark reddish-brown with tan lenticels, becomes gray during successive seasons.

Summercrisp has exhibited no symptoms of fireblight in 20 years of testing even though other cultivars in the same block were infected. Usually, the foliage and fruit have been free of disease and insect pests even without the use of pesticides. However, pear scab has been observed on the fruit in some years.

Summercrisp is being propagated by cooperating nurseries under a royalty agreement with the Minnesota Nurserymen's Research Corporation. Trees will be available to the public in 1987.