

Status of the UW Cranberry Improvement Program and the 'HyRed' Release

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The Cranberry Improvement Program has been working extensively on furthering the release of 'HyRed' as well as bringing along new selections and laying groundwork for future cultivars. In 2005 we continued the evaluation of 2000+ second generation progeny in test plots for consistent bud set, yield and fruit quality. New techniques for scale-up of promising selections were utilized to go from 16 sq. ft. discovery plots to 225 sq. ft. performance evaluation plots. These techniques allow us to scale-up a greater number of individuals and 15 were performed in 2005 and another 25 are set for 2006.

Bulk scale-up of one promising selection (for yield, improved color in October and potential insect resistance), from our original first cross, to partial bed size using conventional planting will be undertaken in 2006. The success of this planting will likely allow it serve as a model for future releases where yield is a higher priority (unlike 'HyRed' where fruit color was the primary goal).

Ongoing evaluation of tetraploid cranberry hybrids will continue in 2006 and observations and data collected in 2005 will be used to develop methods to monitor yield and vigor, fruit quality, and most importantly pollination and fruit set. A critical factor we have learned is the influence of competing pollen sources on tetraploid fruit set, which will be controlled for evaluation in 2006.

New hybridizations have/are being performed to lay the groundwork for future selections by testing hypotheses related to specific yield components. These crosses rely on advanced selections as parents. One test cross ready to plant in 2006 will test the hypothesis of maximizing the growing season to maximize yield. To accomplish this, an early flowering selection was crossed to a late maturing, vigorous selection to determine the effects on fruit size in the progeny.

Extensive developmental and regional testing of 'HyRed' fruit color has confirmed (once again) its early fruit color and the universal high color in all regions tested so far. Even at later harvests dates 'HyRed' yields double the TACY values when compared to most other cranberry varieties. There are now almost thirty 'HyRed' sites, mostly in Wisconsin, but also one or two each in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Oregon and British Columbia. A 'HyRed' logo has been developed to allow growers and handlers to specifically identify 'HyRed' cranberries in the marketplace.