

'Sweet Thing' Sour Cherry, New for 2021 By Bob Bors

Released on the 100th anniversary of Horticulture
at the University of Saskatchewan



History

'Sweet Thing', a hybrid of 'Carmine Jewel' and 'Erdi Jubileum', is the highest quality sour cherry we have observed in our cherry breeding program. 'Carmine Jewel', the first sour cherry variety we released, has been dependable over many years. 'Erdi Jubileum', from Hungary, has great fruit quality but is not hardy enough for growing in the colder areas of the Prairies. Also known as 'Jubileum' ®, it was Rick Sawatzky's favourite tasting cherry among those he was growing in pots in the greenhouse and using for breeding. The breeder in charge of the Hungarian cherry program indicated that 'Jubileum' ® might have sweet cherry in its lineage due to open pollination.

Although still experimental in zone 3 (which is Saskatoon's hardiness zone), we think it is suitable for hardiness zone 4 or warmer. In Zone 3 it may do well in protected areas such as urban backyards or rural areas with windbreaks, but additional testing is still needed. About 2010, when temperatures dropped to -50°C, 'Sweet Thing' suffered severe dieback and did not recover because it was already in a stressed situation. Apple trees were crowding it on the west side and within the row most of the other cherries were taller. Fortunately, we had sent cuttings of it for virus-free clean-up to an Agriculture Canada facility in British Columbia. These are now certified virus-free and we are beginning to test it in warmer areas of Canada and are also establishing a new trial at the University of Saskatchewan.

Description

While most of the University of Saskatchewan cherries are 3 to 4 grams, 'Sweet Thing' has large burgundy fruits in the range of 5 to 6 grams. They are sweeter and firmer than most sour cherries. The bush is expected to grow to about 2.5 meters, but needs additional testing in more areas. The original plant was a heavy producer when only 1.5 meters tall.

For more information, download "Growing and Using University of Saskatchewan Sour Cherries" from www.fruit.usask.ca.