**Cultivar Corner**

**COLUMBIA STAR BLACKBERRY**
**TESTED AS ORUS 3447-1**

*Inventor: Chad Finn, USDA-ARS Corvallis*

Chad Finn answers some questions about this new cultivar, released in 2008.

**What makes Columbia Star special?**

It’s the first machine-harvestable, thornless blackberry cultivar that is high yielding and has fruit quality equal to or better than Marion, the current standard. Columbia Star fits both the fresh and frozen market, but 95% of the Pacific Northwest blackberry crop is processed, so fruit is primarily available as individually quick frozen fruit, dried, pureed, or juiced for baked goods, sauces, smoothies, cereal, and cereal bars.

**When was the cross made?**

2005

**What is the pedigree of Columbia Star?**

NZ 9629-1 and ORUS 1350-2 (Black Butte × ORUS 828-43). The dominantly controlled source of thornlessness was derived from germplasm provided by Plant & Food Research New Zealand and traces back to the Lincoln Logan source of thornlessness.

**What is the size of the family from which Columbia Star was chosen?**

55, a moderate size, but we tried for 100.

**How long did it take for Columbia Star to go from a seedling selection to a dominant commercial cultivar?**

Less than 10 years, as it quickly got the industry’s “seal of approval.” A grower with one of the largest blackberry acreages in Oregon happened to visit the station the day we were going over our plots with a machine harvester. He saw the fruit coming off and was really excited. Two months later he told the growers who sell to him that he would back them on planting Columbia Star and take their fruit.

**Are there other siblings that have commercial potential?**

Another sibling (ORUS 3447-2) will be released in 2016.

**Will this cultivar be used in RosBREED and how?**

Columbia Star was a parent of populations that are being used to identify genetic loci controlling fruit sweetness, which is one of the attributes contributing to its outstanding flavor.

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RosBREED is a Coordinated Agriculture Project composed of a multi-state, multi-institution, and multi-disciplinary team of scientists dedicated to the accelerated genetic improvement of U.S. rosaceous crops using diagnostic DNA tools. This project is funded through the USDA-NIFA Specialty Crop Research Initiative by a combination of federal and matching funds.
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