‘White Robin’ Peach

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‘White Robin’ peach [Prunus persica (L.) Batsch] is jointly released by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, the Univ. of Georgia, and the Univ. of Florida to provide an early-ripening, moderate-chill, white-fleshed peach for trial by home gardeners, u-pick growers, local markets, and specialty market shippers in areas where ‘Flordaking’ and ‘June Gold’ are well adapted. This area is a belt running from southeastern South Carolina through southern Georgia and northern Florida to south central Texas.

Origin

‘White Robin’ originated in Gainesville, Fla., from a 1972 cross of FL21-74 x FL3-71 (Fig. 1); it was selected and propagated in 1975 and tested as FL5-16W. Budded trees have been tested in Georgia at the Univ. of Georgia research farm near Attapulgus, at the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture station in Byron, and at commercial farms near Tifton, Quitman, and Cairo. Budded trees have been tested in Florida at the Horticultural Sciences Dept. in Gainesville. It has also performed well in Spain and France.

Description

‘White Robin’ fruit have been observed on own-rooted and budded trees since 1975. Trees are vigorous, semi-spreading, and produce a moderate number of flower buds, similar to ‘June Gold’. Under good conditions for fruit set, ‘White Robin’ requires a moderate amount of fruit thinning. Fruit are medium size for early-season fruit, averaging nearly 60 mm in diameter when thinned 15 to 20 cm apart (Table 1). Fruit ripen 87 to 90 d after full bloom. They are semi-freestone when soft ripe. The flesh is resistant to browning, melting, white with a few streaks of red, firm, and of good to excellent quality, although less aromatic than traditional high-chilling white-fleshed varieties such as ‘Belle of Georgia’. External fruit appearance is attractive, with 50% to 80% red blush over a pale yellow to white ground color. Pits have little tendency to split. Harvest period, which lasts ≈7 to 10 d, begins in South Georgia in late May of most years, usually coinciding with the harvest of ‘June Gold’ peach. There are no other moderate-chill, commercial, white-fleshed peach cultivars available during this period.

Leaves are moderately large with reniform petiolar glands. Resistance to bacterial spot [Xanthomonas campestris pv. pruni (Sm.) Dye] is moderately high, equivalent to that of ‘June Gold’. Flowers are large, showy, and pink. Pollen is yellow and abundant. Trees are self-fertile. The major advantages of ‘White Robin’ are its unique ripening period, combined with excellent firmness and good quality (Table 2). ‘White Robin’ is heterozygous for the nectarine trait.

Culture

Trees of ‘White Robin’ are estimated to require 500 chill units (cu). This is based on full bloom consistently occurring after ‘Flordaking’ (400 cu) and 1–2 d before ‘Sunfire’ nectarine (525 cu) at Attapulgus. ‘White Robin’ has fruited well where the coldest month (January) averages 12 to 14°C. In most seasons, full bloom occurs from late February to early March (Table 1). Best adaptation would be in areas and on sites where both ‘Flordaking’ and ‘June Gold’ peach have proven reliable in production.

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Table 1. Tree and fruit characteristics of ‘White Robin’ peach at Tifton and Attapulgus, Ga., 1988–94.

| Year | Site | Full bloom date | Harvest date (day of year) | Crop load | Diam (mm) | Shape | Red over-color (%) | Appearance | Quality | Firmness |
|------|------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|-------------------|------------|---------|----------|
| 1988 | T    | NA              | 148                       | 6         | 56        | 7     | 70                | 7          | NA      | 7        |
| 1989 | T    | 14 Feb.         | 135                       | 2         | 67        | 7     | 70                | 7          | NA      | 7        |
| 1990 | T    | NA              | 138                       | 7         | 53        | 7     | 80                | 7          | 7       | 7        |
| 1991 | T    | NA              | 136                       | 5         | 58        | 6     | 50                | 7          | NA      | 8        |
| 1992 | T    | 4 Mar.          | 153                       | 8         | 54        | 6     | 70                | 8          | 8       | 8        |
| 1993 | A    | 8 Mar.          | 154                       | 1         | 65        | 7     | 60                | 7          | 7       | 7        |
| 1994 | A    | 21 Feb.         | 139                       | 6         | 62        | 5     | 60                | 6          | 6       | 8        |

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Fig. 1. Pedigree of ‘White Robin’ peach.
### Table 2. Average performance of several white-fleshed peach cultivars at Tifton (1988, 1990) and Attapulgus (1994), Ga.

| Cultivar  | Estimated chilling requirement (day of year) | Crop load (mm) | Diam (mm) | Shape (%) | Red color (%) | Appearance (%) | Quality (%) | Firmness |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| Starlite  | 650                                          | 128            | 6.3       | 53        | 5.7           | 73             | 7.0         | 6.7      | 6.0      |
| White Robin | 500                                         | 142            | 6.3       | 57        | 6.3           | 70             | 6.7         | 6.7      | 7.3      |
| La White  | 650                                          | 174            | 5.7       | 64        | 7.0           | 77             | 6.3         | 6.5      | 5.5      |
| SE*       | ---                                         | 7.8            | 1.3       | 3.7       | 0.8           | 5.5            | 0.6         | 0.5      | 0.5      |

*Hours at or below 7 °C.

0 = no crop; 7 = full crop.

Shape, appearance, quality, and firmness ratings: 1 = least desirable; 7 = commercially acceptable; 10 = most desirable.

SE = weighted average SE.

### Availability

Inquiries regarding availability of ‘White Robin’ trees may be directed to commercial peach and nectarine nurseries. Limited quantities of budwood, indexed free from Prunus necrotic ringspot virus (PNRSV) and prune dwarf virus (PDV), may be obtained from the NRSP5/IR-2 Collection, Washington State Univ., Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center, Prosser, WA 99350. Genetic material of this release will also be deposited in the National Plant Germplasm System where it will be available for research purposes, including development and commercialization of new varieties.

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Fig. 2. Typical fruit of ‘White Robin’ peach.