

Canadian Dwarf Sour Cherries Update – 2007 - 2010

At CREC: We were able to obtain both ‘Carmine Jewel’ and ‘Crimson Passion’ dwarf sour cherry from a propagator in Canada, for research purposes, in 2007. In the time since, release to the United States has been delayed, though we have found some sales through website searches. In the United States, only Gardens Alive, Inc. subsidiaries such as *Michigan Bulb*, *Gurney’s Seed and Nursery* and *Henry Fields Nursery* are selling ‘Carmine Jewel’. The parent company, Gardens Alive, Inc., provided research funds to the University of Saskatchewan, selected several new cultivars and paid for the virus-free certification process to bring the plants to the US. (www.fruit.usask.ca)



The cherry plants at CREC were received as small, 6- to 12-inch-tall dormant, rooted tissue culture plants. There were 20 plants of each variety and about 18 each survived. Growth is really quick for these shrubs; after each growing season, average ‘Carmine Jewel’ heights were: 19, 46, 60 and 69 inches. Widths are similar, though slightly slimmer.

To date, pests have been almost non-existent with the exception of rodents. With the great snow depth these past three winters, rodents have made nests in the grass walkways with runs to the base of several cherry plants. Several ‘Carmine Jewel’ plants have been affected but are trying to recover. One ‘Crimson Passion’ plant was completely girdled in 2010 and there were no recovery buds produced. In the fall of 2010, protected and anchored mouse bait was placed near susceptible plantings to try to limit the damage.

These Canadian cherry selections are very low-suckering, so much so, that some cultivars may have a hard time recovering from wind or rodent damage. In order to protect dormant buds, prevent catastrophic wind or rodent damage and encourage a plant that appears to have a wide crown, it is recommended to plant the young plants several inches deeper than they were grown or to place them onto their sides in a trench and cover the shoot with soil so that only the tip is exposed to light.

The plants at CREC had their first real crop in 2010. ‘Carmine Jewel’ produced a handful of fruit in 2009 and so a large jump was expected. 2010 was the first year for ‘Crimson Passion’ to flower. There are 12 plant of each variety, though not all had fruit due to mouse damage and regrowth in prior years.

Name	Harvest 2009	Harvest July 28, 2010	
		Weight (lbs)	Brix
Carmine Jewel	handful	37.4	16.4
Crimson Passion	X	7.7	18.8