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BOUNTY: A NEW PEACH FOR EAST TEXAS

Kim Patten and Elizabeth Neuendorff

'Bounty' peach, has been released by USDA and Texas A&M because of its large fruit size, excellent flavor, and productivity, particularly under dry soil conditions of East Texas. Its ability to produce fruit of uniform maturity throughout the canopy makes it especially suitable for once-over harvesting. 'Bounty' has outstanding potential as a fresh market peach for East Texas and is recommended for trial in the mid-atlantic and northeastern U.S.

'Bounty' was tested as B7020, selected in 1973 by Harold W. Fogle, at the USDA-ARS, Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland. It was tested extensively at Beltsville; the USDA-ARS, Appalachian Fruit Research Station, Kearneysville, WV, by R. Scorza; at the Texas A&M University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Overton, Texas, by K. Patten and E. Neuendorff; at the USDA-ARS-SE Fruit and Tree Nut Laboratory, Byron, Georgia, by W. R. Okie; and to a limited extent by D. Ramming, USDA-ARS Fruit Production Research Field Station, Fresno, California; and D. J. Werner, North Carolina State University, and D. Cain, Clemson University.

Trees of 'Bounty' are vigorous with large scaffold limbs. At Overton, 'Bounty' blooms simultaneously with Topaz and Ranger. Data from Byron, Georgia, indicate that 'Bounty' requires approximately 750 hours of chill for normal bud break. Only light thinning is required to achieve large fruit size. Occasionally, late spring frosts at Overton, have reduced yields and increased average fruit size up to 4" in diameter. Yield of mature trees has averaged 3 bushels/tree under non-irrigated conditions at Overton. 'Bounty' fruit are large, well shaped, firm, attractive and highly flavored with no prominent tip or suture. The flesh is yellow with smooth texture and is slow to oxidize (turn brown) even after 24 hours exposure to ambient air. The fruit surface has a light pubescence with a red blush ranging from 30% in the Overton area to 80% in Kearneysville. The ground color has a tendency towards yellowish-green, but once the fruit are firm picking ripe, the undercolor is a clear, attractive, yellow. The fruit are freestone with no pit splitting noted in Texas or West Virginia, but a small percentage has been noted with a light crop load. Harvest date over a 3 to 4-year period has ranged from June 25 to July 14 in Texas; from June 25 to July 14 in Byron, Georgia; and from August 11 to August 18 in Kearneysville, West Virginia.

Trees of 'Bounty' pruned in the open vase form, tend to mature fruit uniformly throughout the canopy. Two years of once-over harvesting in Kearneysville indicated that the uniformity and maturity were superior to other cultivars tested. 'Bounty' trees appear to

be resistant to bacterial spot under normal disease pressure, but have been found to be moderately susceptible under epiphytotic conditions in North Carolina. The levels of cold hardiness and flower bud production exhibited by 'Bounty' provide for high levels of productivity in all but the coldest peach-producing areas.

The ability of 'Bounty' to produce large crops of firm large size fruit under non-irrigated, dry-land conditions indicates an outstanding potential as a fresh market peach for 750 hour chilling zones in Texas.

Its large size and non-oxidizing flesh make it particularly suitable for roadside stands that serve customers interested in canning fresh peaches. 'Bounty' should be available from several nurseries for spring planting.