

## Peaches grow in Ontario outside of the Niagara Region

### What is this research about?

Peaches are normally grown in areas with milder temperatures. In Canada, these areas include the Niagara region of Ontario and the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. Milder temperatures are also needed for grape growing and commercial greenhouses, both of which are expanding. As a result, there is less land available each year for planting peach crops, leading to an increased demand for fresh and canned peaches. It is possible that global warming may allow peaches to be grown in other regions. This research measured the success of growing peaches and nectarines outside of traditional areas.

### Keywords:

Peaches, apricots, agriculture, fruit cultivars, cool climate, cold tolerance

### What did the researchers do?

An orchard of one-year old trees was planted of each of fifteen peach varieties and two nectarine varieties in soil that was suitable for growing fruit trees in Simcoe, Ontario. Trees were managed in a similar manner as in commercial peach farms (e.g. watering, fertilizing and thinning of fruit). Researchers monitored the trees for seven years and measured how well the trees grew and survived, how many years it took each tree to produce fruit, and the amount of fruit produced by each tree.

### What you need to know:

Some regions in Ontario, not typically known for growing peaches, may be able to successfully grow this crop and increase the supply of fresh and canned peaches.

## What did the researchers find?

After seven growing seasons, only two peach varieties, *V85684* and *HW271*, had more than 50% of trees die. *HW271* and *Redhaven* (both are peach varieties) grew best, while *HW273* and *Vivid*, also peach varieties, grew the most slowly. The bloom dates for all varieties (April 19 to May 13) occurred at a time when frost was possible in the Simcoe region. Temperatures were below -28 degrees Celsius during two years of the experiment, which killed the flower buds in those years. The nectarine trees were more vulnerable to bud and leaf damage and produced less fruit. Of the peach varieties, *Redhaven*, *HW272* and *V84061* were the most productive, while *Harrow Beauty*, *V85384*, *HW273* and *Vivid* produced the largest fruits.

## How can you use this research?

**Fruit Growers and Cannery** can use this research to select varieties of peaches to grow in slightly cooler regions.

**Plant Scientists** can expand on this research and look at the possibility of growing other “mild temperature” crops outside of their typical zone.

## About the University of Guelph researcher:

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## Article citation:

Cline, J., Norton, D. (2012). Performance of 17 peach and nectarine cultivars in a southern-Ontario, non-traditional growing region. *Journal of the American Pomological Society*, 66,3, 133-144

## Cite this work:

University of Guelph, Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship (2012). Peaches grow in Ontario outside of the Niagara Region. Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/10214/5580>

This summary is a project of the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship (ICES) at the University of Guelph, with project partners: the [Catalyst Centre](#), [SPARK](#) Program at the University of Guelph, and the [Knowledge Mobilization Unit](#) at York University. This project is part of the Pan-Canadian [Research Impact](#) Network. [http://csahs.uoguelph.ca/pps/Clear\\_Research](http://csahs.uoguelph.ca/pps/Clear_Research)