

'Pink Lemonade,' 'Razz,' 'Sweetheart,' and 'Cara's Choice': superb blueberries from ARS

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As a plant geneticist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Mark K. Ehlenfeldt has either developed, or helped develop, a dozen new varieties of blueberries, including "Pink Lemonade." Although not a first of its kind, "Pink Lemonade" is likely America's most popular pink blueberry. It's one of several new blueberries developed by ARS scientists.

That interesting shrub growing in a neighbor's front yard may actually be exactly what you think it is—a somewhat unusual ornamental that produces pink blueberries. These berries not only look pretty, but they're tasty, too, according to U.S. [Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) scientist Mark K. Ehlenfeldt.

As a plant geneticist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in Chatsworth, N.J., Ehlenfeldt has either developed, or helped develop, a dozen new varieties of blueberries, including "Pink Lemonade."

Although not a first of its kind, "Pink Lemonade" is likely America's most popular pink [blueberry](#). In 1991, Ehlenfeldt chose the [parent plants](#) that later yielded today's "Pink Lemonade." Results from his test plots in New Jersey and findings from West Coast evaluations by ARS [plant geneticist](#) Chad E. Finn in Corvallis, Ore., led to the decision to officially "release" this blueberry as what is known as a numbered selection (specifically, ARS 96-138) in 2005, and, in 2007, to name it

"Pink Lemonade."

After a new kind, or variety, of plant has been thoroughly tested, "releasing" it typically involves giving it a name, describing its pedigree and other features in a release notice (somewhat like a botanical birth announcement), and making it available to one or more suppliers of foundation plant materials so that commercial nurseries can buy and propagate it for wholesale or retail sale.

"Razz," another stellar blueberry from the Chatsworth program, offers a flavorful surprise: It tastes quite a bit like a [raspberry](#). "Razz" was bred by USDA's first blueberry breeder, Frederick W. Coville, in 1934, and was chosen for further study during the next decade by USDA and university researchers. Originally regarded as too unusual for its time, "Razz" was later rediscovered, newly tested, then officially released last year.

"Sweetheart" is a beginning and end-of-season treat. It produces firm, delectable, medium- to medium-large berries in mid- to late-June, and will also produce a small crop of new berries months later, if the autumn is mild. Ehlenfeldt named and released "Sweetheart" in 2010.

Some blueberry fans regard "Cara's Choice" as the best blueberry they have ever tasted. Ehlenfeldt describes it as a very sweet, medium-sized berry that has a pleasant aroma. This berry can be allowed to remain on the plant for several weeks after ripening. It will continue to sweeten, while enabling growers to extend their harvests over a longer period of time.

Former USDA blueberry researcher Arlen D. Draper selected the parents for "Cara's Choice." Evaluations by Draper, Ehlenfeldt, and others led to release of "Cara's Choice" in 2000.

More information: Read more about these berries in the current issue of Agricultural Research magazine and in release notices posted at [www.ars.usda.gov/pandp/people/ ... le.htm?personid=1556](http://www.ars.usda.gov/pandp/people/...le.htm?personid=1556)

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