

Choosing an Almond Variety

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I often get asked which almond varieties I would plant if I were starting a new orchard. This is a very difficult question to answer. Although yield is very important, there are other important considerations as well. Disease and insect susceptibility, bloom and harvest date, marketability, even personal preference need to be considered. If you are a small grower with only a few acres and no equipment, you may consider planting what your neighbor has so sprays and harvests can be coordinated together. Three varieties are generally better than two for pollination, but again small growers need to consider the expense of a third harvest. Many handlers now accept Butte and Padre harvested together. There are several new varieties not widely planted that have performed well in University variety trials. However, when planting any new variety, a grower assumes some risk of potential unknown drawbacks. You can pick up a summary of the regional almond variety trials in our office. Many of these varieties can also be viewed at our office demonstration "orchard" along Service Road.