

## California Peach Rootstock Evaluation - 1995

Principal Leaders: R. Scott Johnson, Extension Pomologist, UC Kearney Agricultural Center, Parlier, CA 93648; Ted M. DeJong, Pomologist, Department of Pomology, UCD, Davis, CA 95616; and Dave Ramming, Plant Breeder, USDA, Fresno, CA 93727

PROGRESS OF THE WORK AND PRINCIPAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS: In 1987 a collection of over 80 potential peach rootstocks were lined out in a nursery and budded to O'Henry peach. These items included numerous *Prunus* species, and many interspecific hybrids such as peach-plum, peach-almond, apricot-almond and plum-apricot. In 1988, 5 trees of each were planted at the Kearney Agricultural Center (KAC) together with several standard rootstocks. Over the past 8 years, these trees have been evaluated for compatibility, suckering, tree size, yield, fruit size, and disease and nematode susceptibility.

Eight of these selections show promise as semi-dwarfing rootstocks. Compared to Nemaguard they are considerably less vigorous. Dormant and summer pruning weights have consistently been less than half of the values for Nemaguard. When properly thinned, fruit size has been good, averaging about 200 grams.

In 1995, hardwood cuttings of these selections were sent to a commercial nursery. These were budded to 2 main peach varieties (Flavorcrest and Loadel) with the goal of producing 50 trees of each combination. Several trees of numerous other scion varieties were also made to test compatibility. In 1996, these trees will be planted in a large replicated trial at the Kearney Agricultural Center.

USEFULNESS OF FINDINGS: California peach growers are very interested in dwarfing rootstocks as a vigor management tool. These selections will be very useful to them. Grower trials are planned for the next few years.

WORK PLANNED FOR NEXT YEAR: The replicated trial will be established at KAC and plans will be made for grower trials.