

Another Change In California Pistachio Production

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The California pistachio industry now has 33 years of documented commercial production; statistics can be viewed at <http://www.acpistachios.org/pdf/2011Statistics.pdf>. In 1979, there were 31,651 acres total, 25,440 bearing and 6,211 non-bearing, in California. The 25,440 bearing acres produced 17,200,000 pounds at 676 pounds per acre. At \$1.60 per pound, or \$1,081 per bearing acre, the total value of California's 1979 pistachio crop was \$27,500,000.00. Thirty-three years later in 2011 there are 226,336 acres, 152,944 bearing and 73,392 non-bearing acres of pistachios in California. The 152,944 bearing acres produced 443,800,000 pounds at 2,902 pounds per acre. At \$1.98 per pound, or \$5,745 per bearing acre, the total value of California's 2011 pistachio crop was \$878,720,000.00. In 33 years the acreage increased by a factor of seven, the yield per bearing acre by a factor of four, the total production by a factor of 26. The value per acre increased by a factor of five and the total crop value by a factor of 31. These figures document the development of a successful California nut crop. Pistachios may soon surpass the walnut industry in bearing acres to become California's second largest nut crop.

One major factor in the success of the California pistachio industry has been the industry's willingness to invest in research and apply the results. Research that produced new information about water requirements and quality, diseases, insect pests, pruning and nutrition are what helped produce the average four fold increase in production per bearing acre over 33 years. Application of this research required changes in production practices at the farm level.

Among recent research results was the Joseph Maranto, Dan Parfitt and Craig Kallsen's joint 2005 release of the patented female cultivars, Lost Hills and Golden Hills, and the pollenizer male Randy pictured below. To date, over one million trees have been planted. Not only do these three promising releases have different production requirements from our traditional cultivars Kerman and Peters, they also have a major propagation difference. These are patented varieties. As patented varieties a royalty is due on each tree produced. Whoever produces a new Lost Hills, Golden Hills or Randy tree must pay a patent royalty to the University of California, the administrator of these three patents. The patent payment guidelines and policies are detailed below.

“UC Davis Pistachio Varieties: Golden Hills, Lost Hills, Randy

Pistachio varieties Golden Hills, Lost Hills and Randy were developed by Dr. Dan Parfitt, Joseph Maranto MS and Craig Kallsen MS at the University of California at Davis (UCD). The varieties are proprietary to UCD and are covered by U.S. Plant Patent Rights. The varieties have been officially released by UCD for commercialization, and are available for licensing through UCD. License rights are available for California nurseries and growers.

For California nurseries licensed by CDFA to sell nursery stock, license rights are available to propagate and sell plant material to growers.

For California growers, license rights are available to propagate plant material, but not to sell to others. Alternatively, growers can purchase plant material from nurseries licensed by UCD and use (without further propagating) the plant material without need for licensing. UCD can provide names of licensed nurseries. UCD can also provide names of licensed nurseries providing propagating material as well as on-site budding services. Alternatively, for growers who purchase plant material from licensed nurseries but want to do additional propagating starting with the purchased material, license rights are available.

License agreements are available for a one-time license issue fee of \$500, with a royalty of \$1/tree for sales of trees (for nurseries) and \$1/tree per tree propagation by a grower. “

Information on licensing arrangements, including names of licensed nurseries, is available from:

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Fig. 1. Lost Hills and Golden Hills compared to Kerman. Photo by Craig Kallsen, Kern City UCCE Farm Advisor and Co-inventor of these cultivars with Joseph Maranto and Dan Parfitt.

Planting these new cultivars will not change how a pistachio grower develops his new orchards. A typical grower will purchase and plant his rootstocks and contract with a budding service for the usual field budding. The difference is that now whoever produces the budded tree, the budder or the nursery, must now pay the royalty as specified above. Payment of royalties ensures breeders like those who invented these cultivars will continue to do so in the future.

