

# Fire Blight Resistant Pears

Personal comments in red (David Ulmer 2020)

## USDA Pear Cultivars

### **Magness - One of the Ulmer family favorites!**

- Released in 1960 by the Beltsville, MD Agricultural Research Center.
- Excellent flavor and texture, similar to 'Comice'
- Almost immune to shoot and flower infection by fire blight. Trunk and scaffolds can be infected through wounds.
- Pollen-sterile; cannot be used as a pollinizer
- Matures in early September; keeps until December under refrigeration.

### **Moonglow - I grew this variety in Mississippi. It did not blight, good flavor.**

- Released in 1960 by the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.
- Good flavor – mild and subacid
- Highly resistant to fire blight
- Matures 7 days before 'Bartlett'

### **Dawn - I have never planted this pear - Some have stated that fire blight resistance is minimal. It is very early ripening when we are into stone fruit.**

- Released in 1960 by the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.
- Excellent flavor and texture
- Moderate resistance to fire blight.
- Early maturing – early August

### **Potomac - Had my first crop this year. I think I waited too long to pick. I'll reserve judgement until I have more experience with this variety.**

- Released in 1993 by USDA-ARS-AFRS and The Ohio State University
- Aromatic sub-acid flavor - Buttery, juicy texture
- Highly resistant to fire blight
- Matures 2 weeks after 'Bartlett' - Stores 2 months without core breakdown

### **Blake's Pride - Have not fruited this variety. My tree is growing slowly - probably not enough water.**

- Released in 1998 by USDA-ARS-AFRS and The Ohio State University
- Aromatic flavor and aroma, similar to 'Comice'
- Highly resistant to fire blight
- Matures 2 weeks after 'Bartlett' - Stores for 3-4 months without core breakdown

**Shenandoah - I have a two year old tree purchased from a NY nursery as scions are not yet available from the Repository.**

- Released in 2002 by USDA-ARS-AFRS and The Ohio State University
- Aromatic, sub-acid to acid flavor; mellows in storage
- Fire blight resistance equal to 'Seckel' - **Moderate at best**
- Late maturing: Harvest 4 to 5 weeks after 'Bartlett' - Stores 5 months without core breakdown

**Sunrise - I do not have this variety - scions are not yet available from the Repository. Too early ripening for me.**

- Released in 2006 by USDA-ARS-AFRS and Ohio State University
- Aromatic, sweet flavor; high consumer sensory ratings - Productive
- Moderately resistant to fire blight
- Matures 2 weeks before 'Bartlett' (Clapp's season) •Stores for 2-3 months without core breakdown - **That's very good for an early ripening pear.**

**Gem - I have a three year old tree and had my first fruit this year - scions are not yet available from the Repository.**

- Joint release with Oregon State University, Michigan State University and Clemson University, 2013
- Good fruit quality and appearance – good consumer acceptance - Can be eaten crisp or softened - Long storage (5 months) with little loss of firmness or quality
- Moderate fire blight resistance
- Long harvest period – 3 weeks without loss of storage , beginning in early September

## **Harrow/Vineland Canadian Pear Cultivars**

**•Harvest Queen - I grew in MS prior to release as HW 602 - Did well with good flavor. Have not tried it here.**

- Released 1982
- Good flavor Bartlett like
- Moderate fire blight resistance
- Harvest two weeks before Bartlett - early August

**•Harrow Delight - I grew in MS prior to release as HW 603. Fair quality. Small grafted limb died of fire blight 2015.**

- Released 1982
- Does not keep well
- Good fire blight resistance
- Harvest two weeks before Bartlett - early August

**Harrow Sweet** - I have a three year old tree that had fruit in the second year. Very good pear here. I think it will be a favorite.

- Released 1991
- Excellent flavor - Bartlett-like
- Moderate fire blight resistance
- Harvest 3 weeks after Bartlett

**Harovin Sundown (Marketed as Coldsnap)** - I have a young tree that has not fruited.

- Released 2008
- High fruit quality: sweet flavor, little grit
- Best after 3-4 weeks of cold storage
- Fire blight tolerant
- Harvest late September - three weeks after Bartlett

## **Purdue University Pear Cultivars**

**Green Jade** - I have not grafted this variety

- Released 2004
- Mildly sweet, buttery to melting, slight aroma
- Fire blight resistance - Tolerant, similar to Honeysweet
- Maturity: Early August - Storage Life: ~ 2months

**Ambrosia** - I have not grafted this variety

- Released 2005
- High quality fruit, with sweet flavor and no grit
- Tolerant of fire blight
- Matures mid-August

### **Honeysweet**

- Released 1977
- Excellent "Seckel'-like flavor - **That was my experience in MS, but not in Sebastopol.**
- Good fire blight resistance
- Self-fertile or parthenocarpic
- Matures early September

## Other Blight Resistant Varieties

**Warren - Family favorite. Found by my mentor, T.O. Warren in Hattiesburg, MS. Felt by many to be a sister seedling of Magness that was never formally released by the USDA. It is a fairly low chill variety, but does not bloom early. It bears fruit in Houston, TX - Magness does not.**

- Released by T.O. Warren in 1976
- Excellent Flavor
- Highly resistant to fire blight
- Pollen sterile - *seems to set well and may be parthenocarpic to some degree.*
- Matures early September - pick a week or two after Bartlett. Stores at low 30s temperature for three months

**Elliot (Trademark Selena in France and Spain)- I'll admit, I had never heard of this variety until one of our members, Bob McCarville, told me he was ordering scions from the Corvallis Repository. After reading about it on the GRIN site and Joan Morgan's, *The Book of Pears*. I feel this is a variety that should be evaluated by the group!**

- Released 1988 by Dr. Kay Ryugo, **University of California, Davis,**
- Buttery texture; flavor similar to Bosc
- Good fire blight resistance
- Harvest 2-4 weeks after Bartlett - stores 16 weeks at 0 C

**El Dorado - At one time thought to be a possible replacement for 'd Anjou. It is one of my recommended varieties for a late ripening pear. Winkleman appears to be identical.**

- Released 1945 by Robert Patterson, Placerville, El Dorado County, California
- Excellent flavor with good sugar/acid balance
- Tolerant of fire blight
- Harvest 4-5 weeks after Bartlett. *My fruit were not ready to pick until early Oct. 2019*

**Seckle - An excellent tasting pear with fairly good blight resistance. I lost most of my tree during the 2014 and 2015 fire blight years. It survived and is recovering nicely. Remember, blight resistance does not mean immunity and some years even blight resistant trees can become infected.**

- Released 1817
- Excellent Flavor
- Moderate fire blight resistance
- Harvest about 2 weeks after Bartlett

**Tyson - Small early pear. Very delicious but, like most early pears, does not keep well. Better than Clapp's Favorite. Tyson is very tardy setting fruit. I have fruited it in a few years by topworking to a mature tree. The old saying "plant pears for your grandchildren" is really true for this variety.**

- Released mid 1800s
- Excellent Flavor
- Excellent fire blight resistance
- Harvest about 2 weeks before Bartlett

There are many European x Asian pear hybrids that are fire blight resistant. I have listed some in the article I wrote for the Redwood Empire Chapter website. None of them really have the flavor and texture that the ones listed here possess. That said, if you experience bad fire blight, look to the hybrids that have been developed such as Ayers. Here is a link to my article: [http://crfg-redwood.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/blight\\_resistant\\_pear\\_2016.pdf](http://crfg-redwood.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/blight_resistant_pear_2016.pdf).

**Asian Pears - I have had fire blight kill or damage most all Asian pears. Shinko is the only one that is very fire blight resistant and it is not listed in the Corvallis Repository fire blight resistant list. Ya Li and Tsu Li are listed, but blight has killed them several times in my orchard!**

### **Shinko**

- Released 1941
- Good Flavor
- Excellent fire blight resistance
- Ripens mid to late September - hangs on the tree for several weeks.

**Links to good articles about resistant varieties:**

<http://shaponline.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Performance-of-New-Fire-Blight-Resistant-Pears-Bill-Shane.pdf>

<http://shaponline.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/New-Fire-Blight-Resistant-Pear-Cultivars-MAFVC-2013.pdf>

