A New California Strawberry

**TIOGA**

TIOGA, a new high-yielding strawberry variety for California, has been released to nurserymen for unrestricted propagation. Limited increases were grown by nurserymen during 1963. Requests for plants should be directed to commercial nurseries or plant brokers. Virus-free stock eligible for entry in the California Strawberry Certification Program is available for nurserymen from the Foundation Plant Materials Service, University of California, Davis.

Tioga was selected at the Wolfskill Experimental Orchards, University of California, Davis, in 1955 from a population of about 300 plants. The Fresno and Torrey varieties (released in 1961) were selected that same year from a population of about 300 sibmates grown at Torrey Pines. Another sib population of about 300 was grown near Lancaster, Los Angeles County, the same year. Thus three varieties were named from a total population of about 900.

Tioga was tested as Cal. 53.9-2. The female parent was the Lassen variety, and the male parent was Cal. 42.8-16 whose female parent was the Sierra variety. On a percentage basis, Tioga, Fresno and Torrey are derived from: Nich Ohmer—31.5%, Blakemore—15%, U. S. 634—14%, Banner—9.5%, Fendalcino—9.5%, U. S. 543—9.5%, N. Y. 4626—8% and Narcissa—3%.

Tioga will yield at least as much as Lassen under optimum conditions, and in almost all of the tests, it has yielded significantly more than Lassen. Tioga has also consistently outyielded all other California varieties that it has been compared with, including: Shasta, Solana, Fresno, Torrey and Wiltguard.

Tioga fruit has averaged about 10% larger than that of Lassen. It is also larger than Fresno, Shasta and Torrey fruit, and only slightly smaller than Solana fruit.

In appearance, Tioga is at least as attractive as prime Shasta and considerably superior to that of Lassen. The fruit is long and conical with a tendency toward wedginess. The color is slightly lighter than that of Lassen, and the finish is exceptionally glossy. Pollination is usually complete and the fruit is generally smooth from all types of plantings. The achenes (seeds) are medium in size, bright yellow in color, and positioned
Tioga fruit is firmer than any other University variety. In descending order of firmness they rank as follows: Tioga, Fresno, Shasta, Torrey, Solana and Lassen. The ability of the fruit to tolerate the handling and storage involved in fresh shipment to distant markets depends on firmness.

Considering the first month of harvest, production starts on Tioga about the same time as Fresno, somewhat later than Torrey, Lassen or Solana, but ahead of Shasta. Tioga consistently outyields any of these varieties if the first 60 days of harvest are considered, however.

Tioga plants are vigorous and prolific in the nursery and store very well for summer planting. They are tolerant of warm winter growing conditions and salinity. Plants usually escape serious virus infection although they are only medium in tolerance to virus. Tioga is about as resistant to mildew as Lassen, and chemical control is usually necessary. The variety is highly susceptible to Verticillium.

Tioga (with its sister varieties Fresno and Torrey, and also the Solana variety) is regarded primarily as a replacement for its parent, Lassen. However, the outstanding performance record of Tioga in several years of testing in all of the important California growing areas, justifies a recommendation for commercial use in all strawberry areas of the State.

Tioga has performed best in all locations from summer-planted, stored plants. For optimum performance, summer plantings should usually go in earlier than Lassen, Torrey or Shasta—and about the same time as Fresno or Solana. If Tioga is planted too late, the yield is greatly reduced.

Winter-planting tests with low elevation plants have not been very successful. However, properly timed winter plantings of high-elevation plants with clear polyethylene applied at planting time showed promise in the preliminary evaluations of 1964 production plantings.

Fertilizer requirements are considerably less with Tioga than for the Shasta variety, and excessive fertilization should be avoided.

R. S. Bringhurst is Professor and Pomologist in the Experiment Station, University of California, Davis; and Victor Voth is Pomologist, South Coast Field Station, Santa Ana.