

PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
IX INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM  
ON  
PLUM AND PRUNE GENETICS, BREEDING AND POMOLOGY

Convener  
F. Sottile

Dipartimento Colture Arboree  
University of Palermo, Italy

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ISHS Section Pome and Stone Fruits  
ISHS Commission Stone Fruits  
ISHS Working Group on Plum

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# **The Ninety International Symposium on Plum and Prune Genetics, Breeding and Pomology**

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## FOREWORD

The IX International Symposium on Plum and Prune Genetics, Breeding and Pomology took place in Palermo from 16 to 19 March 2008. It was organized by the Dipartimento di Colture Arboree of the University of Palermo under the auspices of the International Society for Horticultural Science, the University of Palermo and the Assessorato Agricoltura e Foreste of Sicily. The Symposium also secured the patronage of the Italian Horticultural Society (SOI), of the Accademia dei Georgofili, of the Regional Government, of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity Onlus, of the Faculty of Agriculture and of the Consiglio per la Ricerca e la Sperimentazione in Agricoltura (CRA) within the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Forest Politics.

The Symposium was organised and divided into 5 oral and poster sessions and opened with an introductory lecture delivered by Francesco Sottile who spoke, on behalf of a wide number of Italian researchers, about the present stage and perspectives of plum cultivation in Italy. Later, Walter Hartmann gave an historical perspective on the situation of this ISHS Working Group since the beginning of its activities up to and including its present aims regarding the genetic improvement of plums and prunes at an international level.

On the first day, the oral session opened with topics related to genetic resources and genetic improvement and was followed by the session on “Orchard management, nutrition, quality and post-harvest”; the preservation and characterization of genetic resources connected to the plum, the management of orchard systems, nutrition and the maintenance of high quality standards in the post-harvest phase were the main arguments of the day, which were all deeply investigated through the presentations and the associated discussions.

The second day was entirely dedicated to topics regarding research at a biological and plant/tree defence level and there were several presentations about floral biology and innovations for the defence and control of ‘sharka’ virus, by means of various strategies of genetic improvement, requiring more and more detailed evaluation experiments of the tolerance and resistance sources and of the expression mechanisms.

On the 19th, as part of the oral and poster presentations and discussions, during the cultivar and rootstock session, several experiences in the study of scion-rootstock relationships, in their expression mechanisms and in vigour control of such combinations in relation to recently developed scion cultivars were presented. The main features of recently released cultivars were introduced, especially those present in some countries such as those in Eastern Europe, where the species is widely grown. In the afternoon, posters and discussions were completely focused on biological, physiological and economic topics. There followed the plenary session, which stimulated great enthusiasm and vivid participation towards further study and deeper scientific investigations.

During the closing session, Francesco Sottile, Tony Webster and Walter Hartmann outlined the main elements of the meeting and pinpointed the high quality standards of the work and the excellent relationships apparent among different researchers from different areas of the world.

On the 20th and 21st the participants had chance to visit plum orchards nearby Palermo and a biodynamic plum orchard set up by adopting Japanese cultivars.

The Symposium was marked by the presence of more than 60 participants and by the full appreciation from the ISHS representatives who welcomed the renewed interest in the Japanese cultivar in areas other than the Northern or Eastern European ones.

This volume is based on the papers presented at the Symposium after a deep revision and would represent an upgrade of the research activity that is currently ongoing on this species around the world.

Francesco Sottile  
Convener

## LIST OF CONTENTS

Foreword  
List of Contents  
List of Authors  
List of Participants

### Introduction

Opening address by the Chairman of the Working Group  
*W. Hartmann*

Plum Production in Italy: State of Art and Perspectives  
*F. Sottile, E. Bellini, V. Nencetti, C. Mennone, C. Peano, U. Palara, P. Pirazzini, B. Mezzetti, F. Capocasa*

### Genetic Resources, Breeding and Genetics

Biodiversity of Sicilian Fruit Trees: Studies on Plums  
*F.M. Impallari, M. Monte, V. Girgenti, M.B. Del Signore and F. Sottile*

Inheritance of Some Fruit Characters in Plum (*Prunus domestica* L.)  
*S.H. Hjeltnes, L. Nornes and O.A. Rogli*

Breeding of New Plum Cultivars in Romania  
*M. Butac, I. Zagrai and M. Botu*

Establishing of a PPV Isolate Collection as Prerequisite for an Effective Selection Process in Breeding Plums for Durable Resistance against Sharka  
*J. Hadersdorfer, M. Neumüller, T. Fischer and D. Treutter*

The High-Quality cv “Prugna di Lentigione” Processing Plum  
*M. Grandi jr, M. Grandi, S. Lugli, S. Venturi and S. Sansavini*

Breeding High-Quality Plums At The Bologna’s University CMVF-DCA  
*S. Lugli, R. Correale, M. Grandi jr. and S. Sansavini*

A Survey of Self-Rooted Old Plum Types in Norway  
*S.H. Hjeltnes and Å. Asdal*

### Orchard management, nutrition, quality and post-harvest

Effect of Potassium Foliar Spray on two Plum Trees Cultivars: ‘Strival’ and ‘Black Star’  
*M. Ghannem and M. Ben Mimoun*

The Effect of Foliar Fertilization with Potassium and Magnesium on Fruit Quality in Plums (*Prunus domestica* L.): Preliminary Results  
*E. Vangdal, S. Flatland and I. Mehl*

A Preliminary Transcriptomic Approach to Elucidate Postharvest Ripening of Plum Fruit  
*G.A. Manganaris, C. Bonghi, A. Ramina, V. Ziosi, G. Costa and P. Tonutti*

Using Spring Weather Data to Predict Harvest Date for “Improved French” Prune  
*C. DeBuse, G. Lopez and T. DeJong*

Possibilities for Organic Production of Plum Fruits From the Cacanska Lepotica Cultivar by Applying Trench Planting  
*H. Dinkova, K. Dragoyski, B. Stefanova, P. Mihaylova, I. Vitanova and A. Rusenov*

Fruit Flesh Firmness in two Plum Cultivars - Comparison of two Penetrometers  
*L. Sekse and U. Wermund*

Criteria for Picking Plums (*Prunus domestica* L.) at the Optimum Maturity Stage for the Fresh Fruit Market  
*E. Vangdal and S. Flatland*

Effect of Post-Harvest Fruit Conditioning of two Different Plum Cultivars: First Results on Qualitative Traits Evolution  
*V. Girgenti, F.M. Impallari, M.Monte, N. Giuggioli and G. Reita*

Some Evidence about the Physiological Basis of Flesh Reddening Symptoms in Plum Fruit  
*G.A. Manganaris, C.H. Crisosto, A.R. Vicente and J.M Labavitch*

New Strategy to Improve Plums Yield and Fruit Quality Using Bioregulators  
*V. Chitu, M. Butac and S. Nicolae*

## **Biology**

Phenological Expression in *Prunus salicina* Lindl. Genotypes and its Relationship with Insect Attraction and Pollination  
*S. Radice , E. Giordani, V. Nencetti and E. Bellini*

Self-Compatibility in the Japanese Plum Cultivar ‘Honey Rosa’  
*K. Beppu, I. Endo and I. Kataoka*

High Temperatures During Bloom can Inhibit Pollen Germination and Tube Growth, and Adversely Affect Fruit Set in the *Prunus Domestica* Cultivars ‘Improved French’ and ‘Muir Beauty’  
*M.T. De Ceault and V.S. Polito*

Self-Incompatibility in Japanese Plum. S-Allele Genotyping of Cultivars  
*M.E. Guerra, J. Rodrigo, M. López-Corrales and A. Wünsch*

Environmental Factors and Their Influence on Some Physiological Processes in Plum Tree  
*S. Cosmulescu, A. Baciú and M. Gruia*

Preliminary Cytogenetic Studies in *Prunus salicina* Lindl.  
*M.E. Totaro, A. Fernández , S.Radice, E. Giordani, V. Nencetti and E. Bellini*

Influence of Pollination on the Low Fruit Set in Japanese Plum  
*M.E Guerra, A.Wünsch, M. López-Corrales and J. Rodrigo*

Flowering and Pollination Studies with European Plum (*Prunus domestica*) Cultivars

*E. Koskela, H. Kemp and M.C.A. van Dieren*

Pollination in Chinese-Japanese Plum

*V. Nencetti, E. Giordani, E. Bellini and S Radice*

### **Disease control and PPV**

Possibility of Reducing Chemical Treatments Aimed at Control of Plum Insect Pests

*R. Andreev and H. Kutinkova*

Breeding for Sharka Resistance and High Fruit Quality in European Plum (*Prunus Domestica* L.) at Weißenstephan: Breeding Strategy and Selection Tools

*M. Neumüller, D. Treutter and W. Hartmann*

Control of Sharka by Breeding

*W. Hartmann and M. Neumüller*

Evaluation of PPV Symptoms in Plum Germplasm after Artificial Infection

*F. Paprstein, A. Matejcek, J. Kaplan and J. Sedlak*

In Vitro Grafting as a Tool for Investigating the Hypersensitivity of European Plum (*Prunus domestica* L.) to the Plum Pox Virus

*L. Lichtenegger, M. Neumüller and D. Treutter*

In Vitro Germination of *Prunus Domestica* Seeds

*K. Paskaš, M. Neumüller and D. Treutter*

### **Cultivars and Rootstocks**

The Growth and Yield of Eight Plum Cultivars Grafted on Two Rootstocks in Central Poland

*E. Rozpara, A. Głowacka and Z.S. Grzyb*

Early Performance of Two European Plum Cultivars on Thirteen Plum Rootstocks

*B.H. Pedersen*

The Italian Plum Rootstock Trial: Results for Sicilian Environmental Conditions

*M. Monte, F.M. Impallari, G. Sala, A. De Michele and F. Sottile*

Plum Cultivar Testing in the Western Part of Slovenia

*N. Fajt and V. Usenik*

The Plum Cultivar 'Jojo' Grown under the Conditions of the Central Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria

*B. Stefanova, K. Dragoyski, H. Dinkova and V. Dzhuvinov*

Performance of 'Erunosid' and 'Wala' - New Polish Seedling Rootstocks for Plum and Prune Trees

*M. Sitarek, Z.S. Grzyb and J. Lis*

New Cultivars and Elites For Plum Culture In Romania

*M. Botu, G. Achim, I. Botu, S. Preda and A. Baciu*

Plum Rootstocks for Intensive Plum Culture  
*G. Achim, I. Botu, M. Botu, S. Preda and A. Baciu*

‘Plovdivska Renkloda’ – A New Plum Cultivar  
*A.T. Zhivondov*

Evaluation of Some Introduced Plum Cultivars in RIMSA Troyan  
*K. Dragoyski, I. Minev, H. Dinkova, T. Stoyanova and P. Minkov*

Pomological and Chemical Characteristics of Some Bulgarian Plum Cultivars  
*I. Vitanova, S. Dimkova, N. Marinova, D. Ivanova and H. Kutinkova*

New Selections of Yellow Japanese Plum Obtained in Florence at the DOFI  
*E. Bellini, V. Nencetti and L. Ntarelli*

Japanese And European Plum Cultivar Evaluation in the Po Valley of Italy: Yield and Climate Influence  
*A. Liverani, D. Giovannini, N. Versari, S. Sirri and F. Brandi*

Pomological Characteristics of Dessert Plum Cultivars in Latvia  
*E. Kaufmane, L. Ikase and D. Seglina*

New Bulgarian Plum Cultivars  
*A.T. Zhivondov and V.B. Bozhkova*

Evaluation of Vigorous and Dwarf Plum Rootstocks in the High Density Orchard in Central Poland  
*Z.S. Grzyb, M. Sitarek. and E. Rozpara*

Fruit Quality and Productivity Evaluation of Nine Plum Cultivars  
*H. Jänes, K. Kelt, K. Kahu, L. Klaas, A. Kikas and P. Ardel*

### **General topics**

Plum Culture in Romania: Present Situation and Perspectives  
*I. Botu, M. Botu, G. Achim and A. Baciu*

Plum Production in Bulgaria  
*I. Vitanova, S. Dimkova, N. Marinova, D. Ivanova and H. Kutinkova*

Japanese Plum (*Prunus salicina* Lindl) Production in Extremadura (Spain)  
*M.E Guerra, J. Rodrigo, A. Wunsch and M. López-Corrales*



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*Butac, M.*  
*Capocasa, F.*  
*Chitu, E.*  
*Chitu, V.*  
*Correale, R.*  
*Cosmulescu, S.*  
*Costa, G.*  
*Crisosto, C.H.*  
*De Ceault, M.T.*  
*De Michele, A.*  
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*DeJong, T.*  
*Del Signore, M.B.*  
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*Dinkova, H.*  
*Dragoyski, K.*  
*Dzhuvinov, V.*  
*Endo, I.*  
*Fajt, N.*  
*Fernández, A.*  
*Fischer, T.*  
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*Flatland, S.*  
*Ghannem, M.*  
*Giordani, E.*  
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*López-Corrales, M.*  
*Lugli, S.*  
*Manganaris, G.A.*  
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*Marinova, N.*  
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*Mehl, I.*  
*Mennone, C.*  
*Mezzetti, B.*  
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