Asian Pear Cultivar Trial in New Jersey and Massachusetts

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As part of a Northeast regional variety trial, plantings of Asian Pears were established in New Jersey and Massachusetts in 2010. The trials are located at the Rutgers Snyder Farm, Pittstown, NJ and the UMass Cold Spring Orchard, Research and Education Center, Belchertown, MA.

Background

Asian pears are becoming an important commodity for selected growers in NJ and MA. New Jersey has over 150 acres planted, MA over 60 to date. Growers utilizing tailgate markets and PYO growers with a customer base that desires Asian Pears both do well.

The purpose of this trial is to evaluate superior cultivars of Asian pears for commercial plantings in North Jersey and Massachusetts and identify the best ones for adoption. We hope to identify a handful of cultivars that will be well adapted to sustainable, direct-marketing farm operations.

Tree survival and size will be measured at the end of the study. Annual fireblight counts to evaluate fireblight susceptibility will be taken. Of greatest importance will be the evaluation of fruit quality. Three years of fruit quality data will be taken to identify the

Shinko Asian pear fruit in 2011 at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard in Belchertown, MA.

Shinko Asian pear tree in 2011 at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard in Belchertown, MA.

The 2010 Asian Pear Trial at the Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm, Pittstown, NJ.

superior cultivars.

Hand-thinning time will be assessed for each cultivar. Chemical thinning trials will be continued in New Jersey. Maxcel (6-Ba) at the full label rate has been shown to eliminate 50% of the hand thinning costs for selected cultivars of Asian pears in NJ (more information will be published in a future article).

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