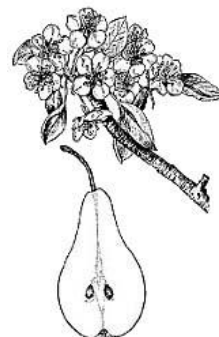


## Curator's Choice: Favorite Pears from the USDA-ARS Collection

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As curator of the World Pear Collection at the National Clonal Germplasm Repository in Corvallis, Oregon (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm?docid=11372>), I have the rare opportunity to evaluate and sample more than a thousand different edible pear varieties. The trees are growing as single-tree specimens in a 10 acre orchard located on the Oregon State University's horticulture research farm east of Corvallis. I am frequently asked the very challenging question "what is your favorite pear." There are easily more than a hundred varieties with fruit quality as good or better than those in the commercial market, and another hundred or more that we have yet to sample. Listed below are just a few of my favorites.



### [Aurora = PI 541119 \(CPYR 25.001\) - Pyrus communis](#)

**A delicious and attractive fall pear.** Originated in Geneva, N.Y., by New York State Agriculture Experiment Station. Named and introduced in 1964. Marguerite Marillat x Bartlett. **Fruit:** large; pyriform; skin bright yellow, slightly russeted, sometimes blushed, very attractive; flesh melting, smooth, juicy, sweet, aromatic, high quality for dessert purposes; longer storage and shelf life than Bartlett; ripens with or just after Bartlett; very well suited for the home gardener and fresh fruit market; keeps well in cold storage until December. **Tree:** vigorous; spreading; productive; fire blight resistance similar to Bartlett; has performed well in New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Ontario.

### [Ayers = PI 541722 \(CPYR 1059.005\) - Pyrus hybrid](#)

**Small but beautiful, high quality, early season. Gorgeous red blush and very juicy.** Originated in Knoxville, Tennessee, by Brooks D. Drain, Tennessee Agriculture Experiment Station. Introduced in 1954. Garber x Anjou. **Fruit:** skin golden russet with a rose tint flesh juicy, sweet; good for eating fresh and average for canning; first picking in mid-August. **Tree:** resistant to fire blight, pollen-sterile.

### [Bartlett - Nye Russet = PI 541236 \(CPYR 423.001\) - Pyrus communis](#)

**Fully russeted fruit is attractive, less prone to blemishes than green Bartlett with slightly more intense flavor.** Originated in Talent, Oregon, by Stephen G. Nye of Medford. Bud mutation of Bartlett discovered in 1924 and introduced in 1937. **Fruit:** skin deep yellow overlaid with a very attractive smooth light golden russet; resembles Bartlett, but ripens 1 week later, firmer, somewhat more spicy. **Tree:** similar in performance and fire blight susceptibility to Bartlett.

### [Beurré Superfin = PI 541150 \(CPYR 558.002\) - Pyrus communis](#)

**Bunyard called it "one of the best half-dozen pears" and I heartily agree.** Originated at Angers, France, by M. Goubalt from open pollinated seed sown in 1837. Introduced to America in 1850. **Fruit:** medium to large in size, roundish-obovate with pointed neck and fleshy stem. Skin smooth, greenish-yellow in color, occasionally blushed. Flesh very fine extremely juicy, quite free of grit, melting. Sweet with acidulous or vinous spicy flavor rates among the best in dessert quality. Probably too soft in texture to withstand commercial handling. Midseason. **Tree:** vigorous, spreading in habit, clean, productive. Moderately susceptible to fire blight.

### [Butirra Rosata Morettini = PI 282935 \(CPYR 119.001\) - Pyrus communis](#)

**A gorgeous early fall pear.** Originated in Florence, Italy, by Alessandro Morettini. Selected in 1940. Introduced in the U.S. in 1960. Coscia x Beurre Clairgeau. **Fruit:** large; skin yellow with bright red blush; flesh white, juicy, flavor excellent; ripens 6 to 7 days before Bartlett. **Tree:** very vigorous; self-incompatible and considerably parthenocarpic; partially compatible with quince rootstock; peduncle thick and short, susceptible to fire blight.

**Dana Hovey = PI 541169 (CPYR 165.001) - *Pyrus communis***

A favorite of Joanie Cooper, president of the Home Orchard Society. Francis Dana, of Roxbury, Massachusetts, introduced this pear about 1854 under the name Dana's Hovey in honor of C. M. Hovey, author of The Fruits of America. The flavor is like Winter Nelis and is thought to be a seedling of Seckel. **Fruit:** resembles Seckel in size and form. Skin greenish-yellow at maturity, russeted, not blushed. Flesh somewhat granular but buttery and very juicy. Much like Seckel in flavor, and equal to Seckel in dessert quality. Keeps longer than Seckel in storage and holds up well after ripening. Less susceptible to core breakdown than Seckel. **Tree:** large, vigorous, upright-spreading, productive, fairly susceptible to fire blight.

**Devoe = PI 541172 (CPYR 173.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**Pretty enough to pose for a still life, creamy flavor with a hint of vanilla.** Originated in Marlboro, New York, by Charles A. Greiner in 1947. Thought to be a seedling of Clapp Favorite. **Fruit:** elongated shape similar to Bosc, coloring similar to Clapp Favorite; attractive bright red spotted blush. Flesh soft, fine, buttery, tender, melting, white to yellow, subacid; stone cells absent. Harvest in mid-September, about 2 weeks after Bartlett. **Tree:** vigorous; tolerant to fire blight and pear psylla, susceptible to scab.

**Doyenne du Comice = PI 271658 (CPYR 148.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**A large, juicy, ripe Comice is best eaten with a spoon. Regarded by many as the standard of dessert quality among pears.** Originated as a seedling in the fruit garden of Comice Horticole, Angers, France. First fruited in 1849 and introduced into America in 1850. **Fruit:** medium to large, sometimes very large. Skin fairly thick, granular, susceptible to blemishes, sometimes russeted, greenish-yellow, often blushed. Flesh very fine, melting, extremely juicy, quite free of grit. Sweet, rich, aromatic, vinous flavor. Midseason. Fruit inclined to bruise easily in the ripe stage. **Tree:** large, stately, vigorous, but slow in coming into bearing. Semi-dwarf on quince, moderately susceptible to fire blight. A temperamental variety which reaches perfection only under limited conditions of soil, climate, and location.

**Hosui = PI 541931 (CPYR 2149.002) - *Pyrus pyrifolia***

**My favorite Asian pear, sweet, crisp and juicy. The russeted skin resists blemishes.** Originated at the National Horticulture Research Station, Tsukuba, Japan. Cross of Ri-14 (Kikusui x Yakumo) x Yakumo introduced in 1972. **Fruit:** large, globose to oblate; skin russeted, golden to gold-brown, enlarged lenticels; flesh off white, sweet, mild, crisp, juicy; ripe with Chojuro, mid August to September in Oregon; stores 4 weeks. **Tree:** medium to large, vigorous, willowy, productive.

**Johantorp = PI 285530 (CPYR 304.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**A very late ripening and cold hardy pear widely grown in Sweden for winter storage.** Like Granny Smith or Goldrush apples, the Johantorp pear will hang on the tree late into the winter. In a mild Corvallis winter we can enjoy them directly off the tree in late December.

**Klementinka = PI 392320 (CPYR 321.002) - *Pyrus communis***

**A small, crunchy, early season pear (mid July) that ripens on the tree.** This Bulgarian variety of unknown parentage is indistinguishable from Turkey's 'Mustafabey', Macedonia's 'Arganche' and Romania's 'Zaharoasa de Vara'. **Fruit:** small like Seckel, pyriform, skin yellow with red blush and no russet; flesh fine-textured, sweet, juicy, firm. **Tree:** naturally compact, easily managed, consistently productive, resistant to scab.

**Leopardo Morettini = PI 318867 (CPYR 347.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**Flavor is an important characteristic of any pear released in Italy, and this is no exception.** Originated in Florence, by Alessandro Morettini. Released in 1967. Coscia x Decana d'Inverno (Doyenne d'Hiver). **Fruit:** medium size, interesting net-like russet, fine, buttery texture, flavor similar to Beurré Superfin.

**Onward = PI 437060 (CPYR 432.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**The favorite pear of Dr. Mel Westwood's long time assistant Harold Bjornstad. Nearly as good as its parent Doyenne du Comice.** Raised in 1947 at England's National Fruit Trials and named in 1967. Laxton's Superb x Doyenne du Comice. **Fruit:** short pyriform to round conic; skin light green becoming yellow-green, often with pink blush; russeted at the stem and eye. Flesh creamy white, melting, very fine, juicy, sweet rich flavor with balancing acidity. **Tree:** easier to grow and often more productive than Comice.

**Rousselet de Reims = PI 541256 (CPYR 496.002) - *Pyrus communis***

**Said to have been the favorite pear of France's King Louis XIV.** An ancient variety believed to date back to the beginning of the Christian era. Grown in the vicinity of Rheims, France, for many centuries. **Fruit:** small, roundish-turbinate, somewhat irregular. Skin greenish-yellow, blushed with dull red on sunny side, sprinkled with gray russet dots. Flesh white, semi-fine, buttery but not melting, moderately juicy. Extremely sweet, aromatic, spicy flavor. Also known as the Musk or Spice Pear. A little later than Bartlett in season. Susceptible to core breakdown. **Tree:** very vigorous, spreading and willowy in habit, almost standard size on quince, productive.

**Rousselet of Stuttgart x Dr. Jules Guyot No. VII = PI 337446 (CPYR 499.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**Attractive rainbow-trout colored, crunchy pear that ripens nicely on the tree.** Five selections of the cross Rousselet Shtutgartskii x Dr. J. Gujo were received in 1968 from the USSR Vavilov Institute in Leningrad. All five selections have crunchy, attractive, pyriform shaped fruit that ripen in August and September. Selection VII is the most attractive, with red blushed and speckled fruit similar in coloring to Forelle. Tree is disease resistant and cold hardy.

**Seckel = PI 541262 (CPYR 519.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**One of the best pears born in America and the most requested variety at the USDA genebank.** A chance seedling found in the outskirts of Philadelphia by Dutch Jacobs, about 1760. **Fruit:** small, obovate-pyriform in shape, usually symmetrical. Skin dull brownish-yellow, usually overlaid with russet and blushed dull red. Flesh somewhat granular, buttery and very juicy. Noted for sweet, aromatic, spicy flavor. Rates among the best in dessert quality. Early midseason. Susceptible to core breakdown if held on the tree too long and does not ripen properly if harvested prematurely. **Tree:** moderately vigorous, sturdy, strong, very productive, widely adaptable, with a tendency to overbear, somewhat resistant to fire blight. Though self-fertile, it benefits from cross-pollination.

**Summer Blood Birne = PI 312507 (CPYR 556.001) - *Pyrus communis***

**Of the half dozen or so red flesh or "blood" pears, this one has the largest fruit and is the most scab resistant.** An ancient cultivar thought to have originated in Germany. Interesting mainly as a novelty, the fruit is still quite small, and not of commercial quality, but with a nice cinnamon-like flavor.

**Wilder Early = PI 541283 (CPYR 605.002) - *Pyrus communis***

**An attractive early pear, ripe nearly a month before Bartlett.** Originated as a chance seedling in Chautauqua County, New York, about 1884. **Fruit:** medium in size, oblong-pyriform. Skin pale green, red blushed on sunny side. Flesh buttery but not melting, moderately juicy. Aromatic, pleasing flavor but second rate in dessert quality. Holds up better than most early pears. **Tree:** vigorous, thrifty, somewhat apple-like in appearance, productive, moderately susceptible to fire blight. Once grown commercially in California.