

Did You Know?



Nothing says summer like juicy, ripe peaches! And ARS scientists work really hard to provide new and improved peach varieties to those who love this wonderful stonefruit.

ARS scientists have released several new peach varieties in the past few years, among them Summerfest, FlavrBurst, and Gulfcrimson. Summerfest and FlavrBurst were created by

Horticulturist **Ralph Scorza** at the ARS Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Kearneysville, WV, and were released through cooperative research with Adams County Nursery, Inc. in Aspers, PA. Gulfcrimson was developed by Horticulturist **Thomas Beckman** at the ARS Southeastern Fruit and Tree Nut Research Laboratory in Byron, GA, in cooperation with the University of Georgia and the University of Florida.

Summerfest is a high-quality, freestone peach with an excellent balance of sweetness and acidity. Harvested in the middle of peach season (mid-August in the Mid-Atlantic States), Summerfest has good firmness, which is important for shipping.

FlavrBurst is also a high-quality, freestone peach that has a good amount of sweetness, but it is lower in acidity than typical peach varieties. FlavrBurst thus may be more suitable for those who cannot tolerate acidic fruits but still enjoy a “peachy” flavor. Classified as dessert peaches, Summerfest and FlavrBurst are best eaten fresh, but they can also be used for baking pies.

A peach suitable for the fresh market, Gulfcrimson ripens from mid to late May. It was developed to help growers in the southeastern portion of the country to reliably provide peaches without the usual amount of winter chilling other peach varieties require. Without a certain number of hours winter chilling, peach trees can’t produce fruit. Gulfcrimson requires just 400 hours of chilling, compared with the 650 hours needed for another popular peach, June Gold.

Peach Salsa (Makes two cups.)

Ingredients:

2 cups peach, pit removed and diced
 1 cup tomatoes, diced
 1 small shallot
 1 teaspoon jalapeño, to taste
 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro
 1 tablespoon juice from fresh lime
 1 teaspoon lime zest
 Dash of freshly ground pepper
 Pinch of nutmeg
 Honey, to taste

Directions:

Dice peaches; remove skin if it is too tough or fuzzy. Dice tomatoes, shallots and jalapeño. Chop cilantro. Place first 5 ingredients in a non-reactive bowl. Add lime juice, lime zest, pepper, nutmeg and honey. Stir and refrigerate for 1 hour before serving. Use on poultry, fish or as dip.

Recipe and story by Sharon Durham, ARS Information Staff.

Contributors to this issue:

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