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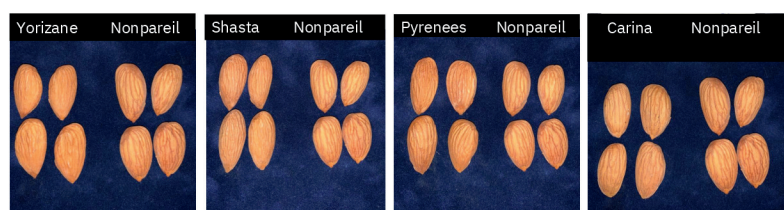
Regional Field Evaluation of New Almond Varieties & Selections – 4th generation

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Abstract

In 2021, an open request was distributed to all public and private California breeders and nurseries and several international breeding programs to obtain promising new almond varieties and experimental selections for comparative testing under commercial California growing conditions. Candidate varieties and experimental selections were received from California, Australia, Spain, and Israel. A committee of UC farm advisors, commercial almond handlers, and consultants participated in a blind evaluation of 50 shelled and in-shell almond samples provided by participating breeders and nurseries. From these, we identified 24 top-tier contenders for field testing. All but two are purportedly self-fertile. Replicated field trials were established in the North (Butte County), Central (Stanislaus County), and South (Kern County) regions of the California Central Valley to document the performance of the experimental varieties and compared against six industry standards. Important horticultural characteristics, kernel quality, and yield will be monitored for several years. The Stanislaus County trial was harvested after the second growing season due to an unusually heavy crop in the vigorous, minimally pruned orchard. Yorzane had the highest yield (1013 lb / acre) of all varieties ($P < 0.05$). Shasta (745 lb/a), Pyrenees (713 lb/a), Carina (668 lb/a), and Constanti (640 lb / a) also had outstanding 2nd leaf yields.

Fig 1. The 2024 top four yielding varieties in the Stanislaus County variety trial.



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Table 4. Yield, Kernel Weight, and Crackout of Second-Leaf Trees^{1,2}

Varieties/Cultivars	Edible Yield (lb / acre)	Mean Kernel Weight / 100 nuts (g)	Crackout ³ (%)
Yorzane	1013 a	1.22 bcde	63
Shasta	745 b	1.10 defg	57
Pyrenees	713 bc	1.20 bcde	53
Carina	668 bcd	0.97 gh	41
Constanti	640 bcd	0.96 gh	27
Vela	584 cde	1.27 bc	51
Florida	562 def	1.15 cdef	50
UCD B2	532 defg	1.34 b	63
Independence	524 defgh	1.24 bcd	66
Y117-91-03	494 efgh	0.90 hi	66
Monterey	487 efgh	1.56 a	49
Penta	463 efghi	0.79 i	34
UCD B12	453 efghi	0.96 gh	53
Y117-106-03	441 fghi	1.16 cdef	66
Lassen	428 fghi	1.15 cdef	57
Butte	406 ghij	1.03 fgh	48
Mira	382 hijk	1.12 cdef	40
UCD B9	352 ijkl	1.33 b	57
UCD B6	333 ijkl	1.24 bcd	40
Nonpareil	282 jklm	1.10 defg	64
Aldrich	256 klmn	1.08 efg	52
UCD B4	250 klmn	1.02 fgh	48
UCD B14	241 lmno	1.16 cdef	54
UCD B15	183 mnop	0.53 j	43
Conway	182 mnop	1.31 b	59
UCD B3	128 nop	1.15 cdef	51
Y119-12-11	107 op	0.89 hi	60
P10.023	62 p	0.91 hi	50
UCD B8	58 p	0.58 j	36

¹Potted trees were planted September 22, 2022, trimmed of all shoots in winter, and commercially harvested in 2024 (2nd leaf). Trees are on Hansen rootstock, planted at 10' x 20' (218 trees / acre), and minimally pruned. No bees were placed in the orchard because harvest was not anticipated.

²Because harvest was not anticipated, NO BEES WERE PLACED IN THE ORCHARD AT BLOOM.

³Percent crackout is the percent kernel weight of an in-shell almond