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FRUIT AND NUT CROPS RESEARCH IN TEXAS, 1987

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SUBJECT TOPIC: General Horticulture With Emphasis on Fruit, Grapes and Pecans

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CROP(S):
1. Peaches
2. Plums
3. Nectarines
4. Apricots
5. Grapes (table)

ABSTRACT:

General Approach and Findings:

1. The Central and North Texas area better known as the West Cross Timbers area has numerous fruit growers. Currently, we are looking at the varieties which perform best in these areas in order to update our recommendations. Crops which have consistently performed poorly in the area that growers would like to produce include apricots and nectarines.

Variety trials with the best potential varieties have been established in 1986 and 1987 to evaluate these new varieties. Along with varieties, we are making efforts to move growers to a total orchard management concept, i.e., optimum weed control, fertilization, irrigation, etc. However, we are also attempting to give growers options as to the different types of weed control, irrigation or fertilization systems available through result demonstrations and let them select the one best adapted to their needs both economically and physically.

2. The grape industry has literally exploded with growth since the success of plantings in the 1970’s. Wine grapes have been the main thrust of the industry with vinifera varieties performing extremely well. Table grapes to date have only been planted on a limited scale.

Several table grape variety evaluation result demonstrations have been established to evaluate California, New York and Arkansas varieties. Along with variety performance, pruning and management techniques, and disease and weed control systems will be evaluated.

3. One major problem facing Texas grape growers is that of having an ideal rootstock. Soil problems faced by growers include cotton root rot, post oak root rot and iron chlorosis in high pH soils. The native, wild, mustang grape may make an ideal rootstock; however, they have been hard to root and graft with the desired
varieties. Recent work by Hawkins and Smith showed that dormant stem mustang cuttings could be induced to root with high concentrations of IBA (10,000 ppm).

In demonstrations performed last year, we obtained 60% rooting and survival with the best treatment. These stocks have since been bench grafted to table grape varieties to evaluate graft compatibility and rootstock performance. In addition, we are continuing work on rooting different strains of mustang to evaluate their potential as a rootstock.