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PROSPECTS FOR THE USE OF EUROPIAN PEACH CULTIVARS IN NIKITA BOTANICAL GARDENS

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Owing to unique natural and climatic conditions of Nikita Botanical Gardens, our science team could achieve considerable successes in the fields of introduction, breeding and development of the southern horticulture. Common Peach (*Persica vulgaris* Mill.) is one of the most promising fruit crops cultivated in Southern Russia. In the Republic of Crimea the peach is beeing cultivated on an industrial basis. It covers here an area of 2.6 thousand ha, which amounts to 50.8% of the total area of fruit crops. Nikita Botanical Gardes has specialized for two hundred years in the introduction of fruit crops from different regions of the world. The peach gene pool of the NBG has been completed by means of involvement of cultivars and forms from different natural areas, as well as by breeding new cultivars. European cultivars make up 8.76 per cent of the total number of cultivars in collection. Our purpose was to explore the peach cultivars collection under conditions of the southern coast of Crimea and to select the sources of biologically valuable properties for use in the breeding for the good commercial qualities of fruits. The research involved 57 cultivars coming from the following European countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, Rumania, Serbia, Slovakia, France, Czechia and Ukraine. The work has been conducted according to the "Program and Technique for Research on Varieties of Fruit, Small-Fruit and Nut Crops". It resulted in the comprehensive assessment of Europian peach cultivars and in selection of promising cultivars from Moldova, Italy, Rumania and France. In the breeding have been successfully used such cultrivars as FavoritaMorettini (Italy), France and Domergue (France). By using the genotypes France and Domergue have been obtained the cultivars Sokrovishche and Zaglyadeniye. By involving of the Italian cultivar Favorita Morettini have been obtained and patented new peach cultivars Granatoviy, Pontiyskiy, Rumyaniy Nikitskiy and Yubileyniy Ranniy. Acknowledgements: This study was funded by a research grant № 14-50-00079 of the Russian Science Foundation.

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