

University of California, Davis
Pomology Department

Sutter Prune/Dried Plum Description (U.S. Plant Pat. No 12,398)

The Sutter prune is a new prune/dried plum cultivar developed within the University of California Dried Plum/Prune Cultivar Improvement Program for use by the dried fruit industry. Fruit of the Sutter prune dries into a very high quality prune with a complex fruity taste. The dried external appearance of Sutter is similar to the industry standard cultivar, Improved French, yet Sutter fruit averages a higher sugar content. One of the benefits of the Sutter prune is that it matures 7-10 days earlier than Improved French thus spreading the time of harvest and drying over a longer more manageable period.



Sutter prune fruit

This new cultivar is the result of a controlled cross made in 1987 between the European plum cultivars Sugar and Primacotes. The original UC selection and testing number was “4-6W-53”. Initial selection of the new cultivar was made in 1993. The first propagation on rootstock was accomplished in 1994 at the UC Kearney Agricultural Center, Parlier. The new cultivar has been under test at Kearney since 1994. Grower field tests have been established and evaluated in both the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. The Sutter cultivar was patented and released in 2000.

The tree of Sutter is similar in form and vigor to the Improved French. The tree has been productive and a regular bearer. The Sutter has been shown to be fully self-fertile. The Sutter has been successfully propagated on Marianna, Myrobalan 29C and Myrobalan seedling rootstock. Propagation on Citation rootstock has resulted in weak trees, apparently as a result of scion/stock incompatibility. Propagation on peach stock has resulted in breakage at the union, also apparently as a result of incompatibility. The use of peach or Citation as a rootstock for this new cultivar is not recommended.

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The Sutter fruit is large, medium dark purple in color and covered with a medium waxy bloom. The fruit resembles Improved French prune in shape. In early tests, the fruit varied from 15 to as much as 20 percent larger than Improved French. Date of maturity of the Sutter prune in a normal year is in early August, ranging from a week to ten days ahead of the industry standard, Improved French. The Sutter fruit develops about 2 degrees soluble solids more than French averaging between 21-27 degrees Brix at maturity. These measurements were made comparing trees of similar age and crop load. The fruit hangs well on the tree with only average preharvest drop. Mechanical harvesting of the fruit has been successful with full removal of the fruit from the tree and minimal fruit damage.

The stone of the new cultivar is nearly free. Machine pitting tests using the Ashlock type pitter have been very successful, with easy and clean removal of the stone. A limited test of Sutter with the Sunsweet type pitter resulted in a lower efficiency than with French. Adjustments to this type of pitter may be necessary to accommodate a longer pit..



Sutter prune fruit and foliage