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THREE NEW WALNUT VARIETIES RELEASED FROM UC WALNUT BREEDING PROGRAM

The University of California has just announced the release of three new walnut varieties from the Walnut Breeding Program. These will be patented as Sexton, Gillet and Forde.

Sexton (UC90-31-10) is characterized by very high yields on young trees and a harvest date at least one week before Chandler. Sexton leafs out a week before Chandler but has low blight scores and is 100% fruitful on laterals with abundant male and female flowers. Sexton is protandrous but the male overlaps most of the pistillate bloom. Potential pollenizers are Tulare and Chandler. The nuts are relatively smooth and round with good seals and good strength. The kernels are light colored, easy to remove from the shell and at 8 grams make up more than 50% of the nut weight. Sexton has a densely branching canopy and will require substantial training and pruning of young trees to prevent overbearing. Sexton is named after Joseph Sexton who started the walnut industry in Southern California with the planting of Santa Barbara soft-shelled walnuts in 1868 in Goleta. Sexton's parents are Chandler for quality, and UC85-8, a Chinese introduction, for yield, size and precocity. The cross was made in 1990.

Gillet (UC95-22-26) has high yields on young trees and a harvest date 10 days before Chandler. Gillet is protogynous, 100% laterally fruitful and has a very low blight score. A potential pollenizer is Sexton. The nuts are somewhat more oblong than Sexton but are similar with good seals and strength, easy to remove light colored kernels and an 8.2 gram nut which makes up over 50% of the nut weight. Gillet is the most vigorous of the three new varieties. Gillet is named after Felix Gillet who introduced walnut varieties like Franquette into Northern California near the turn of the century. Gillet's parents are UC76-80 for quality, and Chico for yield. The cross was made in 1995.

Forde (UC95-26-37) has high early yields and a harvest date that averages 5 days before Chandler but has been moving earlier, up to 10 days before Chandler. Forde leafs out about 5 days before Chandler and is protogynous, 100% laterally fruitful and has a low blight score. A potential pollenizer is Sexton. The nuts are oval to round and medium textured with good seal and shell strength. The large kernels (9 gram) are light and extra light and make up about 54% of the total nut weight. Forde is intermediate in vigor between Sexton and Gillet. Forde's parents are UC61-25 for yield and size, and Chico for yield. The cross was made in 1995.

Forde is named after Harold Forde who was an outstanding walnut breeder at UC Davis between 1948 and 1978, and a benefactor of the current Walnut Breeding Program.

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