



NEWSLETTER 2012-13

Make a visit to www.britishhops.org.uk

Wye Hops Ltd is actively supporting the initiatives of the British Hop Association. In particular, the BHA has designed a new website which highlights the distinctive flavours available from the many different hop varieties grown in the UK today. The Wye Hops database of analyses of these varieties is extensive, covering each variety during development through to commercial production. It has been collated to present typical analysis data for each variety on the website.

www.britishhops.org.uk/british-hop-varieties

Bookmark the site now so that you can easily refer back to it!



Thinking of getting hop plants from the USA?

Hop enthusiasts and gardeners may be unaware of the very serious threat to the UK hop industry posed by importing hop roots from the USA where Hop Stunt Viroid is known to have infected planting materials. Hop Stunt can kill hop plants and has potential to end our industry. Wye Hops is in the process of obtaining certified clean stocks of public US varieties direct from the USDA, and making these available from ministry-inspected propagators in the UK. Why put the UK hop industry at risk? - buy certified British-produced hop plants.

A-plus revamped

The inspection and certification of hop rootstocks, known as the PHPS A-plus scheme, has served the industry well since its conception in 1955, helping control the spread of wilt disease and promoting the planting of healthy virus-free rootstocks. However, there have been many recent changes including the establishment of the new elite stocks glasshouse for the BHA at Stockbridge Technology Centre, reported in the last newsletter. The opportunity has been taken recently to review the operation of the scheme and adapt it to the needs of the current British hop industry. In particular, freedom from Hop Stunt Viroid has been added to the criteria in the scheme. During 2013, every variety in the elite stocks house has been tested for virus and viroid, cuttings taken and new clean plants supplied to the PHPS propagators to renew all the mother plant stocks. 2013 marks a fresh start for the scheme.

Oranges may not be the only fruit ...

A remarkable report at the IHGC Scientific Commission meeting in Kiev in June 2013 identified the source of an outbreak of Hop Stunt Viroid in Slovenia in 2007 as coming from imported oranges. A clever forensic trail led to the discovery that all the oranges in a local supermarket in Slovenia were infected with the hop strain of the viroid and discarded oranges and peel were found at the site of the source of the outbreak. Before this work, who would have thought to point an accusing finger at oranges in a hop garden?

Contact

If you have any comments, questions or would like more detailed information about the articles in this newsletter, please contact Peter Darby or the Directors of Wye Hops Ltd - John Andrews, Thomas Hawkins, Stuart Highwood, Bobby Neame, and Tony Redsell.

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Fuggle flavour renewed - the story so far

Fuggle provides one of the quintessential British hop flavours but its acreage is under constant threat from wilt disease. When Wye Hops Ltd was formed in 2007, one of its primary new objectives was to develop varieties with the flavour characteristics of Fuggle but with improved resistance to pests and diseases. With support from the IBD, a crossing programme was initiated and, following harvest of the resulting progenies in 2010, selections were made. One of these, coded 19/6 and yet to be named, has now been found to have resistance to wilt. During spring 2013 it was used in co-ordinated brewing trials through the London Amateur Brewers club. Their experienced tasting group concluded "that 19/6 had all of the characteristics you would expect from a commercial Fuggle". The selection is now being propagated for farm-scale planting in 2014 to assess its potential to yield.

Robust Endeavour

Endeavour, the first new variety developed by Wye Hops Ltd., provides spicy, citrus, red summer fruit flavours, distinctly different to any other British hop variety. Production from the farm trial sites has been used in several pilot brews including a single-hop cask ale from Marstons in July 2013. With positive responses to these brews, interest is growing. Production from its original trial plot location in 2012 had an oil content slightly lower than expected. Despite this, the variety proved robust and pilot brews by two craft breweries (Howling Hops, Hackney and the Foundry, Canterbury) found that all the flavour notes expected from Endeavour were present and customers liked the beers.

Increasing interest

The upsurge in craft brewing has hugely increased interest in hops and the contribution that they make to flavour in beers of all styles. This is reflected in the media output from Wye Hops and, during the last year, there have been four publications, five separate visits or tours of the breeding garden, twelve presentations and talks, seven reports to industry bodies and ten interviews with the press. Phew - another busy year!

Changing tastes revive Salmon's last

The Institute of Brewing Hops Advisory Committee report in 1960 included commercial brewing trials of a selection coded OZ97a, the result of a cross made by Prof. Salmon in 1921 which was on farm trials in 1957 and 1958. It was Salmon's last variety because he died in 1959 after 53 years of hop breeding. Fortunately, he never saw the report because it rejected the hop as having "a strong coarse American aroma" and "it found little or no favour". This selection has re-appeared from an on-going re-evaluation of the collection of historic varieties held by Wye Hops. But in contrast to 1960, its flavour in craft-brewed beers is now exciting considerable interest and beer bloggers attention. Phoenix-like, a rejected hop from 1921 has arisen for planting on farms in 2014.

A tale of two seasons

Wye Hops Ltd has pioneered the development of naturally aphid-resistant hop varieties. It registered the world's first such variety, Boadicea, in 2008 and this characteristic is uniquely carried by many of the progenies in the current breeding programme. What a difference between the 2012 and 2013 seasons! In 2012, the weather following aphid migration into hops was cold, wet and very windy. Despite no use of aphicides, the pest population never established and no records could be taken. In 2013, a protracted cool spring followed in July by very hot days produced a large fly-in of aphids in unsprayed plots and has allowed many useful observations to be made to take the project forward. At least Wye Hops are grateful to see the aphids this year, even if growers are not!