

**Cherry** *Prunus avium* L.

## Brooks helped expand production

UC Davis has a history of sweet cherry breeding dating back to 1934. Perhaps the program's greatest success was the release in 1984 of **Brooks**, a large, sweet, firm variety that matures earlier and produces fewer double fruits than **Bing**, the industry standard.

In 1964, UC Davis breeders Reid Brooks and William Griggs released five new varieties — **Mona**, **Jubilee**, **Berryessa**, **Bada**, and **Larian** — the latter of which is still grown today.

Paul Hansche was hired to continue the breeding program in the 1960s, but after several rounds of crosses, the program was discontinued in the early 1970s due to lack of funding. UC Davis researchers continued to evaluate



Hansche's crosses, and one variety — Brooks — showed promise. It was released in 1984 and had a major impact on the future of sweet cherry production in California.

Brooks matures about four days earlier than Bing and produces fewer double fruits when grown in the southern San Joaquin Valley. As a result, commercial cherry production could move to the warmer areas of the valley where earlier fruit could be produced. This has allowed California cherry growers to take advantage of excellent markets for fruit produced earlier than anywhere else in the United States.

**Coral Champagne** is another UC variety popular with cherry growers. It was never officially released but growers like it because, like Brooks, Coral Champagne cherries are sweet and firm, they mature early, and seldom produce two fruits on one stem.