

Key Attributes of the Turkish Variety '0900 Ziraat'

Lynn E. Long
OSU Extension Horticulturist

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At the International Society of Horticultural Sciences Cherry Symposium held last summer in Bursa, Turkey there were several papers or posters presented on '0900 Ziraat', the most important cherry variety grown in Turkey. '0900 Ziraat' is currently being sold in the United States as 'Zing'.



Turkey is the second largest cherry exporter in the world, with 35,000 tons exported annually, just behind the USA at 40,000 tons. Nearly all of Turkey's export cherries consist of '0900 Ziraat', and the vast majority of these cherries are marketed in Europe. Ten years ago, little was known about this variety in the west, and even now, most of our knowledge of this cherry is purely incidental, consisting of fruit purchased in stores in Western Europe.

The fruit seems to be of very high quality, firm, with mahogany skin and somewhat lighter flesh. The flavor is excellent and has been readily accepted by consumers. According to Dr. Kenan Kaynaş, et al of the University of Çanakkale, bud burst (presumably first bloom) occurs nine days after 'Van' (Table 1). Fruit ripens about one week after 'Bing'.

Although growers in Turkey have been growing this variety for decades, if not longer, little scientific research has been conducted until recently. Many growers in Turkey use 'Starks Gold' as pollinizer, but productivity of '0900 Ziraat' remains low, especially on mazzard rootstock. In an attempt to determine the best pollinizer for '0900 Ziraat', Kaynaş et al hand pollinated '0900 Ziraat' with the pollen from fourteen varieties. Interestingly, although '0900 Ziraat' blooms late, some of the best pollinizers for this cherry turned out to be mid-season bloomers such as 'Lapins' and 'Van'. The length of bloom for '0900 Ziraat' was 12-15 days. Table 1 lists only the best performers. Three other varieties, 'North Wonder', 'Canada Giant' and 'Sunburst' had comparable bud burst timing, but none equaled the fruit set percentage of the four varieties listed in the table. Other varieties tested were 'Prime Giant', 'Celeste', 'Merton Late', 'Bing', 'Bigarreau Gaucher', 'Sweetheart', and 'Early Burlat'. It is obvious that other varieties grown in the Pacific Northwest should be tested to determine the best pollinizers available to U.S. growers.

Dr. Masum Burak, et al of the Atatürk Institute looked at rootstock interaction with '0900 Ziraat'. Gisela 5 provided a high survival rate of 94%, but nearly 50% of trees budded to Weiroot 158 died. Maxma 14, a rootstock that produces a semi-dwarf tree in France is producing a tree of nearly equal size to mazzard under conditions in Turkey.

Table 1. Fruit set percentage of '0900 Ziraat' sweet cherry as a result of hand pollination with pollen from various pollinizers.

Pollinizer	Fruit set % of '0900 Ziraat'	Bud burst	Petal fall
Starks Gold	28.3	March 22	April 7
Lapins	29.4	March 15	April 7
Lambert	29.2	March 15	April 10
Van	28.1	March 21	April 7
0900 Ziraat	00.0	March 30	April 19