

'Boreal Beast'

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Available in 2018, maybe late 2017



Figure 1. 'Boreal Beast' berries average about 2gms. (16.16.9.25 is the breeding number). They are heavier than Tundra and the Indigo series but not as heavy as 'Boreal Blizzard' or 'Boreal Beauty'. If this page is printed on 8 ½ x 11 paper the berries photos on this page should be shown at actual size.

'Boreal Beast' was so named to help people remember that 'Beauty and the Beast' belong together for cross pollination. In Saskatoon in 2015 and 2016, 'Boreal Beast' overlapped with both 'Boreal Blizzard' and 'Boreal Beauty'. It starts when 'Boreal Blizzard' starts and ends when 'Boreal Beauty' ends and is pollen compatible with both of them and with 'Aurora'. The late bloom characteristic of 'Boreal Beauty' is very rare. 'Boreal Beast' is the closest of our advanced selections for being in sync with 'Boreal Beauty' for bloom time that also has qualities showing commercial potential.

While 'Boreal Beast' isn't as pretty as 'Boreal Beauty' it is remarkable for flavour when fresh or frozen. On average it has received a 4.5 rating on a 5 point scale being evaluated for 3 years in a row. (Very few selection get 4.5 or higher). Field notes indicates it has "one of the best aromas in the program" and "very nice aftertaste". Ripening in mid to late July, harvest can occur after 'Aurora' and 'Boreal Blizzard' but before 'Boreal Beauty' in our location at Saskatoon. With a berry size of 2 grams, its berries can hold onto bushes for a longer time than varieties with even larger fruit. More research is needed but it is thought that 'Boreal Beast's berries might hold on long enough to be harvested at the same time as 'Boreal Beauty' and perhaps could be planted in the same row. (Planting in the same row may increase cross pollination activities of honey bees which tend to stay in the same row.)

Its growth habit is strongly upright and very similar to 'Boreal Beauty'. While 'Aurora' and 'Boreal Blizzard' are considered vigorous, both 'Boreal Beauty' and 'Boreal Beast' are more vigorous and sturdier. Both 'Boreal Beauty' and 'Boreal Beast' have Kurile ancestry in their lineage from which they inherited sturdier branches but they did not inherit the short stature from that ancestor.

'Boreal Beast' Details
Plant Breeders Rights application #: 16-8827
Breeder denomination: 14-16-9.25
Lineage: 50% Japanese, 25% Russian, 25% Kurile
Bloom Time Category: late, more seasons needed to investigate, Its peak bloom is between the peak bloom of Boreal Blizzard and Boreal Beauty.
Harvest Season : ripens after Saskatoon berries and just before our dwarf sour cherries, which is late July in Saskatoon
Fruit Weight: 1.86g (2014), 2.06 (2013)avg.
Fruit Shape: Thick Heart or thick Oval
Fruit Firmness Excellent
Flavour Excellent, very nice aroma and aftertaste
Brix: 18.2 (2014) 13.0 (2013) Total Acidity: 1.8 (2014), 2.16 (2013)
Bush Habit Upright
Bush Vigour Strong
Mildew Resistance Excellent
Productivity Good

Breeding records show 'Boreal Beauty' resulted from the cross 'Best 2' x '46-55'. 'Best 2' is likely 'Indigo Treat' but could have been 'Indigo Yum' which was the next plant over; the original tag disappeared over the winter of 2004, presumably stolen by either a magpie or crow. (We now use labels that birds can't remove). '46-55' was a selection from Maxine Thompson's breeding program. An expanded lineage would be (Kiev #7 x Tomichka) x Maxine Thompson's 46-55. This would make 'Boreal Beast' 50% Japanese, 25% Russian and 25% Kurile.

Perhaps a profitable niche for this variety would be for processing. Ripening in the hottest part of summer will mean it should be cooled quickly or harvested early in the morning before it gets too hot. But it may also mean a shorter shelf life and may be harder to get people to hand pick at that time of year. Bush habit and even-ripening characteristics indicates this variety is suited for mechanical harvesting.

Availability: Usually it takes 2 years to get a newly released variety onto the market. But we got a good start on propagating 'Boreal Beast' and it seems to be propagating well and growing fast in the greenhouse. It might be possible that some propagators might have some plants available by fall of 2017, but 2018 is more likely for greater availability. As of May 2016 very few propagators have this variety.

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