

Scientists from [Sun World International](#) have joined forces with Washington State University's Horticulture Associate Professor and Stone Fruit Breeder, Per McCord to share genetic material from promising cherry varieties.

The pair launched a new research collaboration this spring to exchange and study germplasm, which is found inside pollen and seeds and used for reproduction.

"Pursuing partnerships such as the WSU and Sun World collaboration is a key priority and helps ensure that we remain leaders in the industry", said Jennifer Petersen, Chief Science Officer at Sun World. "They enable us to develop varieties that meet the demands of growers and consumers in a dynamic marketplace".

On one hand, McCord seeks cherries with large fruit size, excellent firmness and flavor, superb postharvest qualities, and cracking and disease resistance adapted to the cooler climates of the Pacific Northwest.

On the other hand, Sun World's germplasm offers the same objectives, with an added focus on developing low- and mid-chill cherry varieties adaptable to the hot California climate. These varieties are less susceptible to sunburn, heat damage and sutures.

"Sun World has desirable germplasm, and we have material that they can benefit from," McCord said. "Now, we're able to share our parental varieties for new crosses, and potentially, high quality releases."

"I'm excited to bring in Sun World's ultra-early and early cherry material," McCord said. "This new material will help extend our program further into the early Pacific Northwest season, further adapt to a changing environment, and provide new, grower-friendly cherry varieties to our growers."

Development of new varieties usually takes a decade or more, so working together and potentially saving time in this long process will improve efficiency, reduce costs and further adapt cherry varieties, thus speeding up breeding and release.

"Our combined research efforts will result in the development of novel cherry varieties with strong consumer appeal and desirable to growers. And through our global network, we will enable growers around the world to produce these WSU-Sun World varieties", Sun World's Sweet Cherry Breeder and Molecular Specialist, Dr. Terrence Frett concluded.

The improved cherry varieties are more practical to grow and ripen earlier, expanding the window of availability and offering higher value to growers for orchards in the Pacific

Northwest, California, the greater Northwest, and worldwide.