



NEWS

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NEW APPLE BREEDER AT CORNELL'S GENEVA EXPERIMENT STATION

Geneva, NY—Dr. Susan Brown, assistant professor of pomology in the department of horticultural sciences, is the new leader of the world renowned apple breeding program at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva.

Brown's previous responsibilities were to breed tart cherries and to evaluate sweet cherries, peaches, and apricots. These duties are being assumed by Dr. Robert Andersen, professor of pomology and current chairman of the department.

"Susan is the best qualified person to assume the major responsibilities for one of our most important breeding and evaluation programs," commented Andersen. "Consequently, she will be taking over the programs that were so ably carried out by two of our most prominent scientists, Dr. Roger Way and Dr. Robert Lamb, both of whom have retired."

Brown plans to combine classical breeding techniques with molecular approaches toward the development of improved apple varieties. Specifically, in cooperation with scientists at the Station specializing in the study of plant diseases, insects, genetic engineering techniques, and preservation of germplasm used as new breeding stock, Brown will be researching ways of incorporating insect and disease resistance into new varieties of apple. "At the same time," said Brown, "these new varieties must have horticultural characteristics that are equal to or better than those already in existence in present varieties." In addition to evaluating hundreds of advanced selections that were under study by Way and Lamb, she will also be working with her colleagues in other departments to incorporate insect and disease resistance into current popular varieties, such as the Empire apple.

Apples are the most economically important fruit crop grown in New York State, having a value at the farm close to 150 million dollars annually. More than 60 new varieties of apple have been developed at the Geneva Station since its inception in 1882, several of which are of great economic importance not only in New York but in other parts of the world as well.

Brown received her B.S. degree from the University of Connecticut, Storrs; her M.S. degree from Rutgers University in New Jersey; and her Ph.D. degree from the University of California, Davis. She came to the Station in 1985.

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