

University Reveals Winning Apple Name

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The wait is over. The University of Minnesota on Tuesday announced the winning name of its newest apple, Frostbite.

Formally known as "MN447," Frostbite dates back to 1921 when the cross-pollinating of two apple blossoms was made at the university's Horticulture Research Center (HRC), now in its 100th year. The apple is actually a grandparent of the most famous U of M apple, Honeycrisp, and joins a long line of successes including Haralson, Zestar and Snowsweet apples. The center is also responsible for several new grape varieties, including the LaCrescent and Frontenac, and plants such as the northern-hardy "Lights" azaleas.

The naming of the apple was chosen following a contest at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum that saw more than 7,000 entries worldwide. Seven Minnesotans who independently submitted the winning name are Lisa Rolf of Eden Prairie, Ted and Caroline Larson of Chaska, Bonnie Winzenburg of Brainerd, Matt Zitzow of Roseville, Dianne Brackett of Wayzata and Linda Davis of Coon Rapids. They will each receive a certificate of congratulations and a basket of Frostbites.

"We're excited to finally have a name," said Jim Luby, a professor in the university's department of horticultural science. "The public interest in this naming was tremendous."

Luby and David Bedford, an apple scientist at HRC, coordinated the judging process. The committee selected two runners-up: "Munchkin" and "Small Wonder."

"It was an exhausting process, but we're very happy with the results," said Bedford.

Frostbite is a specialty apple with striking characteristics -- it is small in size; it has an unusual, almost tropical, flavor; and it is the most winter hardy apple ever released by the university. It is suited for home gardeners and orchards that market directly to consumers.

While the Frostbite name is here, consumers will have to wait to eat the apples. Commercial nurseries will soon start propagating the trees, which will be ready for gardeners and orchards to plant in one to two years. The first trees will then bear fruit to sell around 2014.