‘NuMex Bailey Piquin’ Chile Pepper

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“Chile piquín" is probably derived from the Spanish words chile (pepper) and pequeño (small). Botanically, it is a Capsicum annuum var.aviculare. The piquín fruit is oblong, while the tepin is round (Laborde and Pozo, 1982). Wild Chile piquins are found from the southwestern United States (Arizona and Texas) to the Andes in South America. Most commercial piquín production occurs outside the United States, primarily in Mexico (Dewitt and Gerlach, 1990). Piquins grow wild in the Mexican mountains and are collected and sold commercially, so the total amount of Mexican production is unknown. Piquín is not grown commercially in the United States because of high costs associated with hand-harvesting.

New Mexico State Univ.’s Chile Pepper Breeding Program (CPBP) announces the release of a machine-harvest, piquín-type Chile pepper, ‘NuMex Bailey Piquín’. It was named in honor of Alton L. Bailey, New Mexico State Univ. Extension Vegetable Specialist Emeritus, a valuable cooperator with the CPBP, who actively helped evaluate this selection.

Origin

‘NuMex Bailey Piquín’ originated as a single plant selection from an open-pollinated Chile accession collected in the Caribbean area of Mexico. The original population was a heterogeneous population of several fruit types. Fruit shapes ranged from round to oblong, and length from 1 to 3 cm. The population also had plants that were “vine-like” (indeterminate) and some that were semi-determinate. Most of the individuals had the deciduous fruit characteristic; when the fruit is mature, only the pedicel and calyx remain on the plant (Intl. Bd. Plant Genet. Resources, 1983). None of the plants had a concentrated fruit set, were mature red at harvest without prior drying, and fruits were machine-harvested before frost. The 3-year average total yield was 4490 dry kg/ha. Most of the fruit (84%; 3790 kg·ha−1) were mature red at harvest without prior treatment with a fruit-ripening agent. Shrinkage was similar (38%) for fresh red and green fruit.

Availability

‘NuMex Bailey Piquín’ is exclusively released for commercial distribution by the New Mexico Crop Improvement Assn. (NMCIA). More information may be obtained from the

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Fig. 1. Branch of ripened fruit of ‘NuMex Bailey Piquin’ pepper (left); row of ‘NuMex Bailey Piquin’ pepper at maturity (right).
NMClA (New Mexico State Univ., Box 3CI, Las Cruces, NM 88003; 505/646-4125).

**Literature Cited**


