

'NuMex Mirasol' Chile

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The New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station announces the release of 'NuMex Mirasol', a mirasol-type chile (*Capsicum annuum* L.). The word mirasol in Spanish means looking at the sun. This chile type is called mirasol because the fruit are erect and point to the sun. It will most likely be used as an ornamental; for instance, in the southwestern United States, wreaths made with chiles are a popular tourist product. The wreaths can be made completely of chiles, using New Mexican-type chiles (Bosland, 1992), or chiles can be used to accent a wreath made of other plant materials. 'NuMex Mirasol' was developed upon request of the New Mexico chile producers for a chile that could be used for such purposes. Currently, there are no cultivars or any commercial seed available to fill this niche, thus 'NuMex Mirasol' provides a source of adapted mirasol chile for New Mexico growers.

Origin

'NuMex Mirasol' was developed over 6 years using a pedigree breeding method that included hybridization and repeated single-plant selections. Selection was done for several horticultural traits, the most important being upright fruit, fruit color, the number of fruit per cluster, and the number of clusters per plant. Seed from an F₇ population (Fig. 1) were bulked as 'NuMex Mirasol'.

Description

'NuMex Mirasol' has green cotyledons. As 'NuMex Mirasol' matures, it becomes a multistemmed bush with a fasciculated, up-

right fruit habit (Fig. 2). The plant has green stems without anthocyanin at the nodes. The average plant height is 60.5 ± 11.4 cm, and the

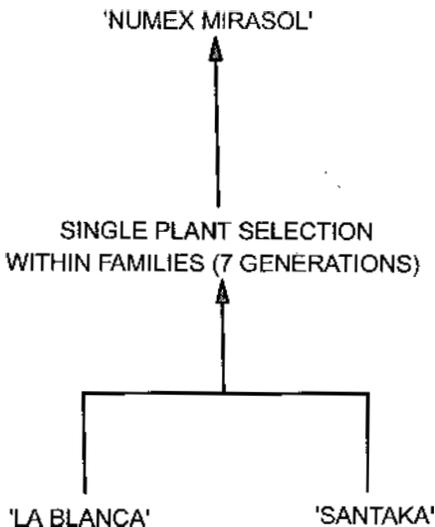


Fig. 1. 'NuMex Mirasol' chile pepper pedigree.



Fig. 2. A fruit cluster of 'NuMex Mirasol' ornamental chile pepper (distance from stem cut to distal leaf tip ≈ 15 cm).

width is 38.90 ± 12.1 cm. The flowers are white without spots. 'NuMex Mirasol' fruit are green when immature and turn red at maturity. The fruit are pungent; but, as they will be used as an ornamental, the intensity was not measured. Each plant produced an average of 15.7 ± 1.5 fruit clusters per plant, with 4.5 ± 1.0 fruit per cluster. 'NuMex Mirasol' pods are 5.5 ± 0.9 cm long and 1.9 ± 0.2 cm wide. The fruit are conic shaped and have two locules.

Availability

Breeder's seed will be maintained for 5 years after the release date by the New Mexico State Univ. Chile Breeding Program. Commercial distribution of 'NuMex Mirasol' is through the New Mexico Crop Improvement Association, New Mexico State Univ., Box 3CI, Las Cruces, NM 88003; phone 505/646-4125. A trial seed sample for research purposes is available from PWB as long as supplies last.

Literature Cited

Bosland, P.W. 1992. Chiles: A diverse crop. HortTechnology 2:6-10.

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