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**Fruits & Roots:
A Celebration and Forward Look**
East Malling Centenary Conference

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INTRODUCTION

This international conference marks the centenary of East Malling Research (EMR) and is an opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved in the last 100 years and look forward to the multiple challenges ahead. Throughout its existence, EMR has focussed on the needs of the fruit industry, especially fruits from perennial woody plants, although it has also embraced other elements of horticulture such as ornamental shrubs and bulbs and, more recently, mushrooms.

EMR is widely known for its classification and subsequent development of tree fruits, but it has also been the home of many other firsts including controlled atmosphere storage of fruits, the use of auxins to control tree growth, the characterisation of incompatibility in cherry and pear and, most recently, the identification and deployment of pheromones from major non-lepidopteran pests as part of integrated pest and disease management. In this conference, to be attended by over one hundred delegates from many countries, we shall focus on four main themes: advanced breeding strategies for improved fruit crops; root-shoot communication and rootstock improvement; pests and pathogens of perennial crops; and fruit production and quality. We are delighted that each theme will be introduced by a leading authority from either New Zealand or the USA.

Our conference also incorporates the Bewley Lecture to be given by Professor Graham Seymour of the University of Nottingham on the genetic basis of fruit ripening towards commercial practice.

EMR and its partners relish the opportunities being offered by modern advances in genetics and phenotyping, that will contribute to the increased production required to meet the aims of food security and healthy diets. This meeting will assist us to deliver innovations to achieve this increased production sustainably while coping with the challenges of a more variable and changing climate, using resources more efficiently, reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing biodiversity.

I am most grateful for the time devoted to organising this conference by EMR's scientists Gerard Bishop (Chairman), Michelle Fountain, Richard Harrison, Robert Saville and the organisation team at AAB, and welcome you to EMR.

Peter Gregory
Chief Executive
East Malling Research

CONTENTS

Tree Fruit Breeding for the 21st Century R SCORZA, A CALLAHAN, C DARDICK, R BELL, Z LIU, C SRINIVASAN, C HOLLENDER, C VANN & M RAVELONANDRO	1–12
Control of fruit quality traits in red raspberry, a review from James Hutton Institute S McCALLUM, D W CULLEN, P HEDLEY, C SIMPSON, R D HANCOCK, L MILNE, C A HACKETT & J GRAHAM	13–28
Scientific Curation of the National Fruit Collection M ORDIDGE, F BAKSH, N CRYER, J DUNWELL, G GIBBINGS, P HALE, P KIRDWICHAI, M PENNELL, C T TURNBULL, A WETTEN, E VENISON, P HADLEY & N H BATTEY	29–30
Genetics of resistance to <i>Amphorophora idaei</i> in red raspberry F FERNÁNDEZ-FERNANDEZ, J M DUNWELL, N H BATTEY & D J SARGENT	31–35
Phenotypic Diversity and QTL Mapping of Absorption and Translocation of Nutrients by Apple Rootstocks GENNARO FAZIO, DARIUS KVIKLYS, MICHAEL A GRUSAK & TERENCE ROBINSON	37–50
Beakbane and Thompson (1939, East Malling) Had It Right: Scion Vigour is Physiologically Linked to the Xylem Anatomy of the Rootstock T M DEJONG, S TOMBESI, B BASILE & D DA SILVA	51–58
Peach, Plum and Apricot Rootstocks for the 21st Century G L REIGHARD	59–66
Grafting with rootstocks induces extensive transcriptional re-programming both locally at the graft interface and at distance in the shoot apical meristem SARAH JANE COOKSON, MARIA-JOSE CLEMENTE MORENO & NATHALIE OLLAT	67–68
Resilience of orchard replant soils to pathogen re-infestation in response to Brassicaceae seed meal amendment M MAZZOLA & S L STRAUSS	69–77
FresaProtect and BerryProtect: mixes of parasitoids to control all common aphid species on protected soft fruit crops - Product development and case studies from three years of experience N DASSONVILLE, T THIELLEMANS & V GOSSET	79–87
Research on apple scab (<i>Venturia inaequalis</i>) at East Malling Research XIANGMING XU	89–96
How far does a weevil walk? T POPE, E GUNDALAI, G HOUGH, A WOOD, J BENNISON, G PRINCE & D CHANDLER	97–103

Sex pheromones of <i>Lygus</i> bugs: forty years on MICHELLE FOUNTAIN, GUNNHILD JÅSTAD, DAVID HALL, PAUL DOUGLAS, DUDLEY FARMAN & JERRY CROSS	105–106
--	---------

Bewley Lecture

Understanding the Genetic Basis of Fruit Ripening – Science Discovery into Commercial Practice GRAHAM B SEYMOUR	107
---	-----

Roots, Fruits and the pieces in between: A review of fruit production systems towards a step-change increases in productivity D S TUSTIN & B M VAN HOOIJDONK	109–118
--	---------

Extending the storage season of apples through selection of low ethylene breeding lines R COLGAN & F FERNANDEZ	119–126
--	---------

Employing chlorophyll indices for <i>in-situ</i> fruit analysis provides a new approach for determining the optimum harvest date in apple M ZUDE-SASSE	127–130
--	---------

Exploiting root biology to increase resource use efficiency and reproductive development of crops under water scarcity WILLIAM J DAVIES	131–137
---	---------

Posters

Fruit quality evaluation of diverse apricot cultivars M C PIAGNANI, L CASTELLARI, P SGARBI & D BASSI	139–144
--	---------

Phenotyping of fruit quality and disease resistance traits in octoploid strawberry (<i>Fragaria</i> × <i>ananassa</i>) LAIMA ANTANAVICIUTE, NICK BATTEY & RICHARD HARRISON	145
--	-----

QTL controlling dots development of fruit skin in Japanese pear EIICHI INOUE	146
--	-----

Aphid parasitoids emergence at low temperature N DASSONVILLE, T THIELEMANS & V GOSSET	147–150
---	---------

The role of chasmothecia in the initiation of epidemics of powdery mildew (<i>Podosphaera aphanis</i>) and the role of silicon in controlling the epidemics on strawberry XIAOLEI JIN, BRUCE D L FITT, AVICE M HALL & YONGJU HUANG	151–155
--	---------

Comparative Transcriptome and Metabolome Analysis of Developing Blackcurrant Seed Provides an Insight into Pathway-Specific Gene-Metabolite Co-expression D JARRET, S ROWBOTTOM, J MORRIS, L JORGENSEN, S R VERRALL, P E HEDLEY, R M BRENNAN & R D HANCOCK	157–162
---	---------

Occurrence and characterization of <i>Phomopsis</i> strains isolated from shoots of fruit trees	
B A KOWALIK-ABRAMCZYK, E D KRÓL, E D ZALEWSKA & Z MACHOWICZ-STEFANIAK	163–165
The fungi occurring on blueberry <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i> L. plants	
E D ZALEWSKA, Z MACHOWICZ-STEFANIAK, E D KRÓL & M SZMAGARA	167–170
A biphasic response of leaf ethylene emission to soil moisture status in tomato	
ANTJE FIEBIG & IAN C DODD	171–180
Population change of the apple scab fungus <i>Venturia inaequalis</i> in mixed cultivar orchards	
THOMAS PASSEY, XIANGMING XU & MICHAEL SHAW	181–182
Physical traits in raspberry provide resistance to pests and diseases	
CAROLYN MITCHELL, REX BRENNAN, JULIE GRAHAM, SCOTT JOHNSON, ALISON KARLEY, TIM O'NEILL & HARRIET ROBERTS	183–187
New apple cultivars bred at Holovousy, Czech Republic	
JAN BLAZEK	189–196
Spring Temperatures Influence Growing Degree Day Model Harvest Predictions for Peach	
L KENEALY, G REIGHARD, B RAUH, W BRIDGES JR & S GAGNON	197–200
Effects of planting density and nitrogen application on seed yield and other morphological traits of the leafy vegetable kale (<i>Brassica oleracea</i>)	
E J BENNETT, F GAWTHROP, C YAO, C BONIFACE, H ISHIHARA, J A ROBERTS & C WAGSTAFF	201–216
East Malling and our understanding of the roots of fruit trees: Past achievements and future prospects	
DAVID ATKINSON	217–222
The use of synomones to attract beneficials into pear orchards	
CHANTELLE JAY, JEAN FITZGERALD, DUDLEY FARMAN, DAVID HALL & PAUL DOUGLAS	223–226
Practical experience of using a prediction system to control strawberry powdery mildew	
B LIU & A M HALL	227–232