



Hop 'Monocacy' - Northeastern Adaptation

USDA-Agricultural Research Service & University of Maryland, USA

A hop plant (*Humulus lupulus*) discovered growing uncultivated in Maryland was found to produce a beer with spicy, floral, and fruity aromatic qualities. Its leaves were sent to the USDA-ARS genebank in Corvallis, Oregon, where it was determined to be genetically unique and grouped most closely with wild North American hops. As a result, the Western Maryland Research and Education Center (WMREC) established a new hop yard to grow this unique plant, 'Monocacy' (PI 700807). This variety has potential to revitalize hop production in the mid-Atlantic.



Photo by Bryan Butler

Cones of 'Monocacy' hop plant.

PROJECT GOALS: To identify a hop that...

- ✓ Is adapted to Maryland's highly variable weather
- ✓ Produces beer with a desirable flavor profile

Problems Addressed

Prior to prohibition, hops were grown throughout the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. In the 1930's, commercial hop production moved to the Pacific Northwest where growing conditions were favorable. Today, more than 95% of U.S. hop production (by acreage) is in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington State. In the early 2000's, renewed interest and demand for hops surfaced in the Northeast, resulting in the need for cultivated hops that are adapted to the highly variable weather patterns in this region.

Solutions Developed

Local farmers donated hops growing on their land to the University of Maryland's WMREC. Among 24 varieties evaluated for growth and brewing properties, the hop plant now known as Monocacy showed promise in producing a beer with desirable flavor. When evaluated at the USDA National Clonal Germplasm Repository in Oregon, Monocacy was shown to be genetically distinct from the >600 hops at the genebank. As a truly Maryland and truly American hop, this plant became exciting and valuable to many local brewers. February 2023 saw the inaugural tapping of three beers brewed with Monocacy.



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