

## Recent Progress in Strawberry Breeding in Iran

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### Abstract

Kurdistan province accounts for a whopping more than half of Iran's entire strawberry production. During the last 30 years, about 30 strawberry cultivars have been gradually imported to the country mainly through Italy and Turkey. Some of these imported cultivars such as 'Queen Elisa' and 'Paros', have replaced the 'Kurdistan' cultivar in open fields. Cultivars such as 'Camarosa' and 'Gaviota' are also dominant in greenhouses of Jiroft and Alborz province. Current cultivars are very high yielding and firm fleshed but they are susceptible to several diseases and poor in flavor. In 2018, Kurdistan Agricultural Research Center started a strawberry breeding program for improving new cultivars. The emphasis was strongly on day neutral selections that are adapted for growing in alkaline soil, combined with superior berry qualities, profitable yields and resistant to common diseases in the region. In the experiments eight cultivars including Queen Elisa, Paros, Ventana, Diamante, Aromas, Camarosa, Selva and Kurdistan were intercrossed. As a result, 187 promising genotypes were selected from 3,000 hybrids and these were compared with parents. From these 187 genotypes, 14 types were selected, as promising cultivar candidates. These 14 selections have excellent fruit characteristics with good yield and have potential for naming in near future.

**Keywords:** Breeding, Imported cultivars, Selections, Strawberries.