To all plant breeders who contribute to the education of others by generously sharing their practical experiences in cultivar development.
Contents

Preface ix
Contributors xi

One • General Principles 1
   Walter R. Fehr

Two • Alfalfa 11
   Richard R. Hill, Jr.

Three • Apomictic Grasses 40
   E. C. Bashaw and C. Reed Funk

Four • Barley 83
   A. Earl Foster

Five • Cotton 126
   Joshua A. Lee

Six • Forage Grasses 161
   David A. Sleper

Seven • Forage Legumes 209
   Norman L. Taylor

Eight • Maize 249
   Arnel Roy Hallauer

Nine • Oat 295
   C. M. Brown and R. A. Forsberg
Ten • Peanut
  David A. Knauf, Allan J. Norden, and Daniel W. Gorbet

Eleven • Potato
  Robert W. Hoopes and Robert L. Plaisted

Twelve • Rapeseed and Mustard
  R. K. Downey and G. F. W. Rakow

Thirteen • Rice

Fourteen • Soybean
  Walter R. Fehr

Fifteen • Sugar Beet
  Garry A. Smith

Sixteen • Sunflower
  Jerry F. Miller

Seventeen • Tobacco
  E. A. Wernsman and Rebeca C. Rufty

Eighteen • Wheat
  R. E. Allan

Index

346
385
437
487
533
577
626
669
699
749
Preface

The commercial production of any plant species depends on the availability of cultivars that meet the needs of the producer and the consumer. The quest for new cultivars is a continual process due to the demand for greater productivity, higher quality, more resistance to pests, and other desired characteristics.

To design a strategy for cultivar development that makes the most efficient use of available resources, a plant breeder must choose from an array of alternative breeding methods. The choice is facilitated by learning from the experience of others who have successfully developed superior cultivars. In this book, successful plant breeders share their experiences and that of their colleagues. They provide a step-by-step description of the process of cultivar development for a crop species, discuss the alternative strategies that are available at each step of the process, and describe those strategies that have been used most successfully.

Crop species were chosen for this book to represent the major types of cultivars that are grown commercially. The development of asexually propagated cultivars, pure-line cultivars, synthetics, multilines, and hybrids are described in one or more of the chapters. Collectively, the chapters describe the application of all breeding methods that are currently used by plant breeders for cultivar development.

The initial stimulus for preparing the book was provided by the students in my plant breeding class at Iowa State University. In the class notes that became a part of Volume I of Principles of Cultivar Development, some descriptions were included as to how cultivars of several species had been developed. The students indicated that they found the descriptions useful for understanding the entire cultivar development process from start to finish and for understanding the theoretical aspects of plant breeding. They found it helpful to compare different breeding
methods by examining how each was applied in the successful development of a cultivar.

Recent books that describe the methodologies employed in molecular and cellular studies of plants have been a valuable source of information to plant breeders interested in using these means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of cultivar development. Similarly, Principles of Cultivar Development is intended to provide molecular and cellular biologists with detailed information on breeding methodologies they can use to establish research goals that will contribute to the genetic improvement of crop species.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the many persons who contributed unselfishly of their time to make this book a reality: to the authors, who generously shared their many years of experience in plant breeding, utilized the experience of their colleagues in presenting a broad view of cultivar development for a crop species, patiently used the outline they were asked to follow in preparing their chapters, and gave serious consideration to the suggestions of the persons who reviewed their manuscripts; to the many plant breeders, who graciously provided information to the authors and reviewed the chapters; to the publication editors, Sarah Greene and Gregory Payne, who provided excellent technical assistance to the editor and the authors; and to my wife Elinor and to Holly Jessen, who made major contributions by drafting figures, typing information, indexing, and proofreading the book.

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