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**Yencho et al.**

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(54) **SWEETPOTATO PLANT NAMED**  
**‘COVINGTON’**

(50) Latin Name: *Ipomoea batatas*  
Varietal Denomination: **Covington**

(75) Inventors: **G. Craig Yencho**, Raleigh, NC (US);  
**Kenneth Pecota**, Raleigh, NC (US)

(73) Assignee: **North Carolina State University**,  
Raleigh, NC (US)

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patent is extended or adjusted under 35  
U.S.C. 154(b) by 238 days.

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(51) **Int. Cl.**  
**A01H 5/00** (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **Plt./258**

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Plt./395

See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**  
**PUBLICATIONS**

Flier on ‘NC98-08’ from the North Carolina Sweetpotato  
Commission’s Annual Meeting at the Wilson Cooperative  
Extension AgriCenter, Wilson NC, on Jan. 20, 2005.

*Primary Examiner*—Kent Bell  
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Myers Bigel Sibley &  
Sajovec, P.A.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

*Ipomoea batatas* ‘Covington’ is an orange-fleshed, smooth-  
skinned, rose-colored, table stock sweetpotato. ‘Covington’  
produces yields equal to ‘Beauregard’, the dominant sweet-  
potato variety produced in the United States, but it is 5-10  
days later in maturity. The storage roots of ‘Covington’ are  
generally shorter and more uniformly shaped and fewer  
“jumbos” are produced as compared with ‘Beauregard’,  
resulting in higher “pack-out” by sweetpotato packers. The  
dry matter content of ‘Covington’ storage roots is slightly  
higher than that of ‘Beauregard’. ‘Covington’ is also resis-  
tant to the russet crack strain of sweetpotato feathery mottle  
virus, moderately resistant to southern root knot nematode,  
and appears to be less sensitive genotype by environmental  
interactions (measured as an improved overall appearance  
score, and the percentage of culls and off-types present at  
harvest), all of which are considered to be major flaws in the  
variety ‘Beauregard’. The flavor of the baked storage roots  
of ‘Covington’ has been judged to be excellent by standard-  
ized and informal taste panels. ‘Covington’ typically scores  
better in this regard when compared with ‘Beauregard’.

**7 Drawing Sheets**

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Latin name of the genus and species: The Latin name of  
the novel, plant variety disclosed herein is *Ipomoea batatas*  
(L.) Lam.

Variety denomination: The inventive cultivar of *Ipomoea*  
*batatas* disclosed herein has been given the varietal denomi-  
nation ‘Covington’.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The sweetpotato (*Ipomoea batatas*) is a member of the  
morning glory family, *Convolvulaceae*. Sweetpotatoes pro-  
duce an edible storage root that is developmentally and  
anatomically derived from root tissue. This contrasts with  
potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*), which produce an edible  
tuber that is derived from an underground stolon and is  
similar in structure to an above-ground stem. New plantings  
of sweetpotato are commonly produced via two methods (1)  
vegetative stem cuttings taken from plants in the field or  
greenhouse, and (2) cuttings of sprouts (i.e. small plants)  
that arise from adventitious buds (i.e. buds that are not  
derived from meristematic tissue) produced from storage  
roots that have been planted in soil in three to five foot wide  
“plant beds” in the spring. These sprouts are cut and planted  
in the field using a mechanical transplanter. In contrast,  
potatoes are typically propagated from cut or whole tubers  
planted directly into the soil. New plants arising from the  
seed tubers are derived from the eye of the potato tuber, with  
each eye being equivalent to a stem node and consisting of  
a raised or depressed ridge or protuberance, bearing a

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scale-like leaf subtending a minute meristematic bud in its  
center and flanked by two leaf primordia.

The color of the flesh of the sweetpotato root varies with  
the cultivar and can range from white to orange to purple.  
Presently, the dominant sweetpotato variety produced in the  
United States is ‘Beauregard’ (unpatented). The present  
invention, a new and distinct sweetpotato variety named  
‘Covington’, provides an improvement over ‘Beauregard’ in  
that it generally produces shorter and more uniformly  
shaped storage roots than ‘Beauregard’ and it appears to be  
less sensitive to genotype by environmental interactions,  
which is perceived to be a major flaw in ‘Beauregard’.  
‘Covington’ also typically scores as well as or better than  
‘Beauregard’ in the flavor of its baked storage roots as  
measured by standardized and informal taste panels.

Lineage. ‘Covington’ originated from botanical seed har-  
vested from the sweetpotato clone NC1528. NC1528 pro-  
duces a vigorous vine similar to that of ‘Covington’. A  
distinguishing feature of the vine of NC1528 is that it  
possesses leaf nodes that typically have purple pigmentation  
(187B); whereas, the internodes of ‘Covington’ do not.  
NC1528 also produces tan-orange to cream-orange colored  
storage roots (22C to 22D) with medium orange flesh (28B  
to 28C); whereas, the storage roots of ‘Covington’ are light  
to medium rose-colored (33D to 34D) that possess a similar  
flesh color (28B to 28C).

NC1528 was one of 26 genotypes present in the North  
Carolina State University (NCSU) Sweetpotato Breeding