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Werner et al.

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(54) **PEACH TREE NAMED ‘GALACTICA’**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./196**

(50) Latin Name: *Prunus persica*
Varietal Denomination: **Galactica**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** Plt./196
See application file for complete search history.

(76) Inventors: **Dennis James Werner**, 268 Kilgore Hall, Horticultural Science Department, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC (US) 27695-7609; **Layne Karlton Snelling**, 59 Kilgore Hall, Horticultural Science Department, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC (US) 27695-7609

Primary Examiner—Kent Bell
Assistant Examiner—June Hwu

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Prunus persica (L.) Batsch ‘Galactica’ is a new and distinct variety of edible peach tree that has the following unique combination of desirable features that are outstanding in a new variety.

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

1. Flower buds that demonstrate a high level of resistance to cold temperature injury.
2. Firm, white, low acid flesh fruit with excellent flavor and aroma.
3. Heavy and regular bearing of large size fruit, up to 3 inches in axial diameter.
4. Fruit with early maturity, typically early July in North Carolina.
5. Unique saucer-shaped fruit.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/022,411**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 27, 2004**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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

6 Drawing Sheets

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Latin name of the genus and species: The Latin name of the novel peach tree variety disclosed herein is *Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch.

Variety denomination: The inventive cultivar of *Prunus persica* disclosed herein has been given the variety denomination ‘Galactica’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Prunus persica* (peach) grown as a fruit tree for home use and for commercial agriculture. Peach is typically grown for their edible fruit that are used for fresh consumption, or for home canning.

The new and distinct variety of peach (*Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch) originated as a first generation descendant from a hand pollinated cross of NCN-4 nectarine (non-patented) × a Chinese saucer peach seedling of unknown origin. The NCN-4 parent was used as the female in the hybridization. The original cross was made in 1995 in Raleigh, N.C. The Chinese saucer peach seedling used as a parent is not available in commerce. The NCN-4 parent used in this hybridization was derived from a hand-pollinated cross of ‘Contender’ (non-patented) × ‘Fantasia’ nectarine (non-patented) made in 1987 at Jackson Springs, N.C. ‘Contender’ was named and released as a peach cultivar in 1987. ‘Fantasia’ nectarine was named and released in Fresno, Calif. in 1969.

The seeds resulting from the 1995 controlled hybridization were germinated in a greenhouse at Raleigh, N.C. in the fall of 1995 and planted in the field in spring of 1996 at Jackson Springs, N.C. These trees, growing on their own roots, first produced fruit in 1998, and one seedling, designated NC98-42, was selected for its large, flat (peento shape)

white flesh fruit, attractive red and cream skin color, fruit with high flavor and aroma, early season of ripening, and heavy fruit production. This original plant was growing on its own roots, and demonstrated characteristics identical to those subsequently expressed when propagated on ‘Lovell’ seedling rootstock.

Plants and fruit of this new variety differ from its parents. The new variety produces white flesh fruit that are larger, more attractive, earlier in ripening, and firmer than the Chinese saucer peach parent. Fruit of this new peach variety demonstrate the flat, saucer shape character, distinguishing it from the ‘Fantasia’ nectarine parent. Few saucer shaped (peento) peaches are available in commerce. ‘Galactica’ ripens 7–10 days later than peento cultivar ‘Stark’s Saturn’ (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 5,123), released in 1985. ‘Galactica’ has different flesh color (white vs. yellow) and higher flower bud chilling (dormancy) requirement (800 hours vs. 250 hours) than peento cultivar ‘UFO’ (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 13,352), released in 2002.

During the year 1999, the original plant selection was propagated asexually by grafting of vegetative buds onto the standard peach seedling rootstock cultivar ‘Lovell’. Grafting was performed by Mr. Daniel Ferris, at his nursery in Huntland, Tenn. The five trees of the variety grafted by Mr. Ferris were established in test plots in 2000. The new variety has routinely been asexually multiplied by grafting, specifically ‘T’ budding. It readily forms a graft union with peach ‘Lovell’ rootstock and resumes normal growth. During all asexual propagation, the characteristics of the original plant have been maintained. Grafted trees on ‘Lovell’ rootstock exhibit characteristics identical to those of the tree on its own roots, and no aberrant phenotypes have appeared.