'Cherry Festival 2026: The Institute of Agriculture Presents Promising Cherry Varieties'

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From June 26 to June 28, 2026, Kyustendil will host the traditional Cherry Festival. The forum, organized by the Kyustendil Municipality in partnership with the Institute of Agriculture and local associations, emphasizes the long-standing traditions of fruit growing, the commercial realization of production, and innovations in selection. The event brings together agricultural producers, processors, scientists, and consumers through specialized exhibitions, bazaars, and a rich cultural program.

Innovations and Sustainability in Selection

institute

Institute of Agriculture – Kyustendil at the Cherry Festival

A highlight of this year's edition is the presentation of new promising cherry varieties from the Institute of Agriculture – Kyustendil. They are part of the targeted project "Testing of Selected Hybrids and Implementation of Innovative Fruit Varieties," on which the scientific unit has been actively working since 2023. The main objective of the research is to test the adaptability of three apple varieties and selected hybrids, as well as three cherry varieties created at the institute, to the challenges of the rapidly changing climate.

According to specialists, it is important to determine which varieties are most resilient and profitable for cultivation under current weather anomalies. At this stage, the data are encouraging, with all new hybrids showing good results in the field. Special attention during the festival will be given to the cherry variety "Stefania," whose commercial advantage lies in its later vegetative development, providing a significantly greater chance of avoiding damage from late spring frosts. Practice shows that at critical temperatures ranging from minus 2 to minus 3 degrees Celsius, such varieties manage to survive and preserve their fruit, while early-flowering trees suffer serious damage.

Another promising variety that you will be able to see and taste at the festival is "Danelia." It also possesses good cold resistance and relative and good resistance of flowers and young fruit sets to late spring frosts. Its flowering is mid-late, 3-5 days after that of Bing. The fruits are large with an average

weight of 7.2 - 8.0 g, with a beautiful, dark mahogany red color, firm flesh and very good taste qualities, ruby juice, and a separating pit.

"Vasinika" is one of the newly selected varieties from IA-Kyustendil. The fruits are very large (8.6 g), broad-heart-shaped to rounded, with black-red colored fruit skin. The fruit flesh is firm and with excellent taste qualities. Obtained from crossing the varieties Van and Stella, the variety "Vasinika" is relatively resistant to cracking, slightly more so than Van.

Market Realization and Added Value

A major part of the three-day program are the commercial areas, where visitors can learn about the quality of this year's harvest. In the central city area, a unique artistic exhibition takes place, showcasing the possibilities for adding value to the primary raw material. Local craftsmen set up their stalls along the "Living Places of Kyustendil Region" alley.

The accompanying events start with the "Cherry Village" in the village of Razhdavitsa, where from June 22 to June 28, daily from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, in several authentic houses and yards with numerous cherry trees, stories will be told about cherries, the tradition of their processing, and the variety of products obtained from the sweet fruit. The organizer is the Ethno Center "The Old Cherry Tree".

program

The sweet taste of summer will be felt with the start of the cherry festival in the Orchard of Bulgaria. See the cultural program by day:

June 26 (Friday)

The start of the accompanying events is set at 11:00 AM at the "Bratstvo 1869" Community Center with the celebration of 85 years since the birth of folk performer Olga Borisova. On the same date, the annual exhibition "The Temple" of the "New Masters" school opens at the Regional Cultural Institute. From 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, demonstrations of arranging cherry stalls and making traditional drying racks will take place in the city center, and from 8:00 PM, the concert program will begin with the participation of trio "BulgariNA," ETNOTIX, and the band "Molets."

June 27 (Saturday)

The commercial, artistic, and culinary exhibitions open at 10:00 AM. At 10:30 AM, a concert by the Professional Brass Orchestra of Kyustendil will take place, followed at 11:00 AM by the official opening with a welcome address by the mayor of the municipality and a specialized presentation of the promising cherry varieties by scientists from the Institute of Agriculture. The afternoon hours offer free guided tours in English (2:00 PM) and Bulgarian (4:00 PM), as well as an art performance by the Youth Center. The evening concert at 8:00 PM includes performances by Elizabeth, Veniamin, and Dara Ekimova.

June 28 (Sunday)

The focus on the last day (10:00 AM – 2:00 PM) falls on processing and gastronomy through the culinary exhibition "Cherries in the Kitchen." A key highlight for professionals in the food sector is the demonstrative culinary presentation by chefs Petar Petrushev and Nikola Simeonov between 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM. The forum will be officially closed with a midday concert by the National School for Dance Art – Sofia.

More on the topic:

The Promising Cherry Varieties from Kyustendil – with Excellent Commercial Qualities