



Canadian Berry Trial Network



LEAD RESEARCHER

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The Canadian Berry Trial Network (CBTN) is working to find better berry varieties to grow in Canada. This ongoing research activity from Cluster 3 is assessing the climatic adaptation, productivity and fruit quality of berry cultivars.

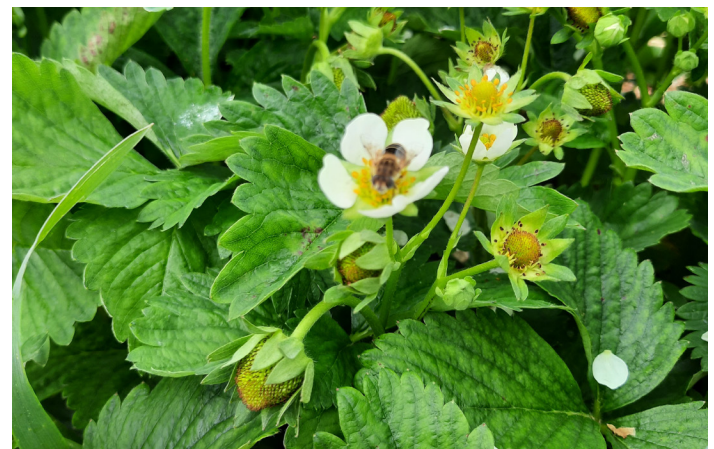
Variety trials of blueberry, raspberry and strawberry are happening in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. Through these trials, evidence-based recommendations are being made for new berry cultivars to grow in each province. Varieties are being tested from Canadian and international breeding programs.

During the first cycle of CBTN from 2019 to 2023, promising strawberry varieties were found for eastern Canadian fruit growers. The varieties had good adaptation and productivity. Nevertheless, significant differences were observed among all trialled berry varieties, which influenced the trial results; no single berry variety consistently yielded the highest results across all years and locations.

This cycle of the CBTN will see in-depth analysis of raspberry and blueberry varieties, employing the same methods used for strawberry varieties in the first cycle.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The first cycle of CBTN had differing production seasons due to variations in general weather patterns and extreme weather events.
- Variety rankings changed annually, even within distinct trial locations, prompting a different approach to data analysis.
- Examination revealed some strawberry varieties with either average or above-average yields in at least two years and two locations, indicating potential resilience to climatic variation.



TOP: Strawberries at harvest time in Nova Scotia in 2022.

ABOVE: Strawberries in bloom in Nova Scotia in 2023 during the growing season.

Photo credits: Canadian Berry Trial Network

- Limited data prevented a similar analysis of raspberry and blueberry varieties in the first cycle, but the plan is to assess weather factors influencing yield in all three crops during this cycle.
- In the 2023 growing season, previously established trials of blueberry, raspberry and strawberry were studied for plant vigour, establishment and hardiness.
- A list of available varieties was developed and reviewed by provincial advisory panels for the 2024 growing season.

