



Berry Research Activities

There is one research activity that is part of the berry group for the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture Cluster 4. This research activity is focused on finding new berry varieties for growers across Canada.

THE CLUSTER 4 BERRY RESEARCH ACTIVITY IS:

ACTIVITY 6

Canadian Berry Trial Network

LEAD RESEARCHER – Beatrice Amyotte, research scientist for small fruit germplasm development with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Kentville Research and Development Centre

This project is generously funded through the Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 4, in cooperation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's AgriScience Program, a Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership initiative, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC), and industry contributors.



Canadian Berry Trial Network



LEAD RESEARCHER

Beatrice Amyotte

Research scientist for small fruit germplasm development with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Kentville Research and Development Centre

The purpose of the Canadian Berry Trial Network (CBTN) is to look into how new and established berry cultivars will perform in the climates of typical berry growing regions of British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. Fruit quality traits and yield potential are evaluated along with the economic competitiveness of new berry cultivars.

The CBTN has blueberry, raspberry, and strawberry varieties in replicated trials at agricultural research institutions in Nova Scotia, B.C., Ontario, and Quebec, as well in unreplicated trials at grower sites in B.C. The varieties include commercial standard cultivars, newly named cultivars, and numbered selections from Canadian and international breeding programs.

This summer, all four provinces harvested blueberry trials established during Cluster 3. There were 16 highbush blueberry varieties evaluated, including two numbered selections from the B.C. Berry Breeding Program, several recent releases from public programs and private breeding companies in Oregon, and some more well-known varieties developed in the north-eastern United States. Data collection is ongoing with preliminary yield results available this winter.

New trials of strawberries were planted in all provinces. These trials included 10 day-neutral and 10 June-bearing varieties. Strawberry trials were established in open fields in B.C., Quebec, and Nova Scotia, while in Ontario the day-neutrals were planted in a tunnel and tabletop system. The day-neutral strawberries will be harvested starting this fall while the June-bearing trials will be harvested in summer 2025.

New raspberry trials were planted in all provinces. The trials included eight florican (summer fruiting) and 15 primocane (fall fruiting) varieties — a few varieties will be planted in 2025 as there were sourcing delays. The raspberry trials will be harvested in 2026.



Strawberry plants at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre in Nova Scotia.

Photo: Toban Dyck



Blueberry bushes at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre in Nova Scotia.

Photo: Toban Dyck





KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- New varieties of strawberries planted this year included UC Golden Gate, UC Keystone, UCD Eclipse, UC Monarch and UC Surflin, which are new disease resistant release varieties from the University of California Davis.
- New raspberry varieties planted this year include three 'Cascade' series cultivars from the Washington State University breeding program, and 'Finnberry' developed by the USDA and Oregon State University.
- On-farm raspberry and strawberry variety trials were harvested this year.
- New advanced blueberry breeding selections were planted this year.
- The CBTN project team has been in contact with breeding programs in the U.S. to potentially access some of their new selections ahead of commercial release.



Blueberry bushes at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre in Nova Scotia.

Photo: Toban Dyck

