



Berry Research Activities

There is one research activity from the berry sector 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 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.

Preliminary results out of B.C. are showing that several test variety yields may outperform standard blueberry cultivars Duke and Draper. Results are being compared with data from Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia to find regional variations. Additional years of data collection are needed to determine if the yields are stable or fluctuate due to climate conditions, plant age, and/or pest and disease pressure. It is too early to recommend these new cultivars to growers until more data is collected.

The next blueberry trials will be established in 2026. The research team is currently in discussions with provincial industry associations, berry specialists and international colleagues to identify potential candidate varieties for trials. There are at least two promising advanced varieties from the B.C. Berry Breeding Program that are being considered, and new selections from U.S. breeding programs may be included.

The day-neutral strawberries in Ontario were harvested starting in fall 2024 with data collection continuing through to spring. The trials in Quebec, B.C. and Nova Scotia were not harvested in fall 2024 due to smaller plant size and instead will be picked starting in spring 2025. All June-bearing trials will be harvested in summer 2025.

There are no official strawberry trials planned for 2025. However, the researchers have decided to establish small trials in all four provinces to collect additional data on select promising varieties. The team is consulting with industry partners to identify four to six varieties of June-bearing and/or day-neutral strawberries to plant this spring. These trials will be harvested starting in the fall and maintained through the next growing season.

There were delays in developing testing agreements with Advanced Berry Breeding in the Netherlands to



Blueberry bush trials at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre in Nova Scotia. Photo: Beatrice Amyotte





trial five of their varieties including the new raspberry primocane cultivars Mapema and Malaika. Due to this, some of the 2024 raspberry trial plots were delayed and will be planted this spring. All raspberry trials will be given the full growing season to establish and will not be harvested until 2026.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Preliminary results out of B.C. are showing several test varieties yields are outperforming standard blueberry cultivars Duke and Draper.
- The next blueberry trials will be established in 2026 with the research team currently identifying potential candidate varieties for trials.
- Day-neutral strawberries in Ontario were harvested starting in fall 2024 with data collection continuing through to spring.
- There are no official strawberry trials planned for 2025, but researchers have decided to establish small trials in all four provinces to collect additional data on select promising varieties.
- Delays in developing testing agreements with Advanced Berry Breeding in the Netherlands to trial five of their varieties mean these will be planted in the spring and harvested in 2026.

Strawberry field trials at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre in Nova Scotia. Photo: Beatrice Amyotte



Calypso, a new blueberry with high yields in trials in British Columbia.

Photo: Beatrice Amyotte



A flower on a strawberry plant at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre in Nova Scotia. Photo:

Beatrice Amyotte

