



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.

Over the winter, new strawberry varieties were selected for trials. Varieties were chosen based on industry consultations conducted in B.C., Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia as well as plant availability. These included 10 varieties each of short day (June-bearing) and long day (day-neutral) strawberries with some variation between locations due to differences in provincial priorities. There were numbered selections from Planasa and new cultivars from UC Davis among the trial varieties. Plants were purchased and circulated during the spring and planted in new field trials. The

next trial plantings will be in 2026 for blueberry and 2027 for raspberry. Variety long-lists are being compiled for these berries.

Strawberry trials planted last year are being evaluated. Blueberry trials planted in 2022 are starting to be evaluated. These include around 16 highbush varieties, with some variation between locations. Harvest season began in late June in B.C. and mid-July in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. The latest varieties are expected to ripen in September. Data aggregation and analysis will be done over the winter.

Raspberry trials planted in 2024 are being managed to promote plant health and vigour but will not be harvested or evaluated this season. On-farm raspberry trials conducted in B.C. showed some promise for two numbered selections from the B.C. Berry Breeding Program. These will be included in the 2027 raspberry replicated trials as they are good options for fresh markets and mechanized harvest.

The researchers are currently selecting trial varieties for next year. They're establishing new replicated trials at research farms in four provinces and new unreplicated trials at grower sites in B.C. The team is evaluating established trials and presenting one research talk or tour per province.



Strawberry rows at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre. Photo: Beatrice Amyotte





Growers visiting the 2024 short day strawberry trial at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre.

Photo: Beatrice Amyotte



Strawberry plants at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Kentville Research and Development Centre. Photo: Beatrice Amyotte

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Strawberry trials planted last year are being evaluated. These include around 10 short day and 10 long day varieties, with some variation between locations.
- Blueberry trials planted in 2022 are starting to be evaluated. These include around 16 highbush varieties, with some variation between locations. Harvest season began in late June in B.C. and mid-July in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. The latest varieties are expected to ripen in September.
- Raspberry trials planted in 2024 are being managed to promote plant health and vigour but will not be harvested or evaluated this season.
- On-farm raspberry trials conducted in B.C. that showed promise include BC 1855.11 and BC 1855.14. These will be included in the 2027 raspberry replicated trials as they are good options for fresh markets and mechanized harvest.

