



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

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Canadian Berry Trial Network



LEAD RESEARCHER

Beatrice Amyotte

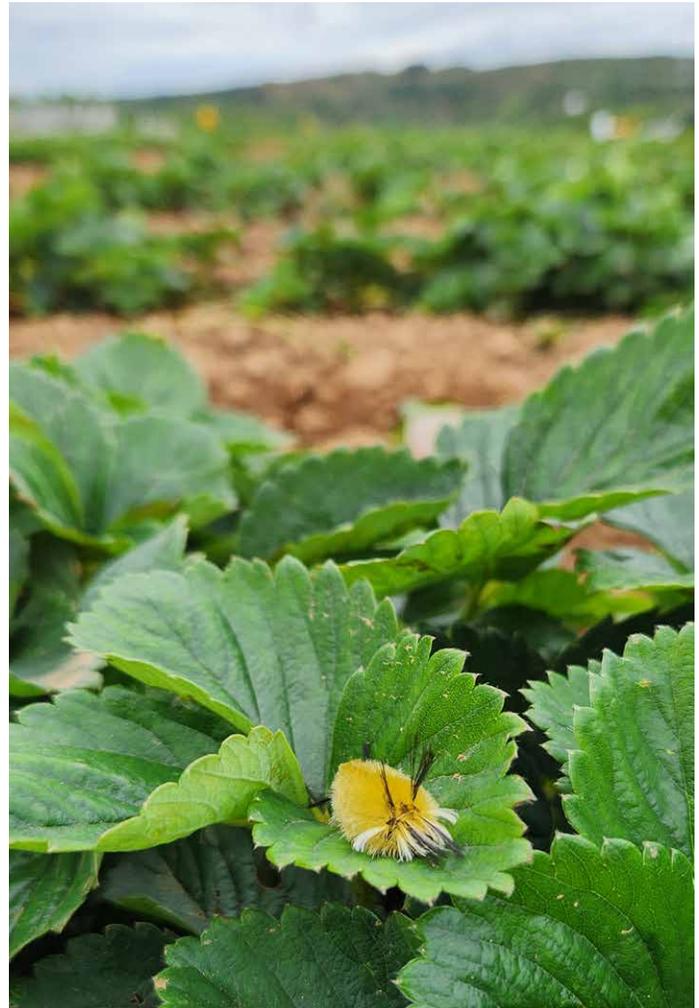
Research scientist for small fruit germplasm development with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Kentville Research and Development Centre

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.

New varieties are currently being selected for strawberry and blueberry trials to be planted in 2026 and 2027. The long list for strawberry varieties includes 16 short day (June-bearing) and 20 long day (day-neutral) varieties. The trial varieties will be chosen based on industry consultations conducted in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia as well as plant availability. Numbered selections from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and new cultivars from Onesime Pouliot's partnership with De Kemp BV are among the potential varieties. The list for blueberry includes nine advanced highbush selections from the B.C. Berry Breeding Program that will be integrated into an established trial of 16 varieties planted in 2022. Plants will be purchased and circulated in spring 2026; the next trial plantings for raspberry varieties will happen in 2027.

New strawberry trials were planted last spring. Varieties were chosen based on industry consultations 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 varieties. The long-day plants were evaluated during the 2025 growing season in Quebec and Ontario; all other trials will be evaluated in 2026.

The strawberry trials planted in 2024 were evaluated during this past summer and fall. These included 10 short day and 10 long day varieties, with some variation between locations. Similarly, the blueberry trials planted



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

in 2022 were evaluated last year too. These include around 16 highbush varieties, with some variation between locations. Data aggregation and analysis is ongoing.

The raspberry trials planted in 2024 were managed to promote plant health and vigour for the first harvest this upcoming year. On-farm raspberry trials conducted in B.C. showed some promise for advanced selections from the B.C. Berry Breeding Program, including BC 1855.11 and BC 1855.14. These will be included in the 2027 raspberry replicated trials since they're good candidates for fresh markets and mechanized harvest.





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

In Quebec, for summer-bearing strawberries, the selection K15-11 showed the highest total yield, although it wasn't statistically different from the standard cultivar Jewel. K15-11 also had one of the lowest proportions of culled fruit among the varieties with the largest average fruit size, along with the UC cultivars Monarch and Surfline. In terms of flavour, Jewel remained the most well-liked variety. In fall-bearing strawberries, Planasa selections 19-106R and 19-011R, showed strong agronomic performance, with 19-011R producing a lower proportion of culled fruit. However, these selections were rated as low to moderate for flavour. Seascape continued to perform very well for taste, with Murano showing comparable sensory quality.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The summer strawberry selection K15-11 showed the highest total yield in Quebec, although it wasn't statistically different from the standard cultivar Jewel.
 - K15-11 had one of the lowest proportions of downgraded fruit and ranked among the cultivars with the largest average fruit size.
- In Quebec the fall strawberry varieties, Planasa selections 19-106R and 19-011R, showed strong agronomic performance, with 19-011R producing a lower proportion of downgraded fruit.
 - These selections were rated as low to moderate for flavour.
- The Seascape strawberry variety continued to perform very well for taste, with Murano showing comparable sensory quality in Quebec.

