



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



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Beatrice Amyotte

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

This year the Canadian Berry Trial Network is evaluating strawberry, raspberry and blueberry varieties across four provinces. As in previous years, the researchers are conducting replicated trials at research institutes in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, as well as unreplicated trials on B.C. farms. Fruit quality traits and yield potential are being evaluated to gauge the economic competitiveness of new berry cultivars and breeding selections.

The research team has established new strawberry trials and is harvesting existing trials of all three fruit crops. They are also planning new blueberry trials for the fall. Winter survival, the timing of flowering and fruiting, yield and fruit quality traits will be evaluated. The data will be used to determine which varieties are best adapted to each region. The results will be compared across years and locations to identify varieties with stable performance across climate conditions.

As of July 2026, the new strawberry trials have been planted. The varieties were selected based on industry consultations and plant availability. They include approximately 10 varieties each of June-bearing and day-neutral strawberries with some variation between locations due to differences in provincial priorities. There are numbered selections from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), a repeat of select day-neutral cultivars from UC Davis and a small number of new Italian cultivars bred for controlled environments.

The new highbush blueberry trials will be planted in fall 2026 in B.C., Ontario and Nova Scotia, and in spring 2027 in Quebec. The new blueberry trials will include 10 to 14 advanced selections from the B.C. Berry Breeding Program along with reference varieties for comparison. The next planting of florican and primocane raspberries will be in 2027.



Visitors at the new strawberry field plots at AAFC Kentville. Photo: AAFC

Last year, the Quebec research team found that AAFC short-day strawberry selection K15-11 produced the highest total yield among the largest fruit sizes while maintaining a low proportion of unmarketable fruit. In Nova Scotia, K15-11, K16-21 and SC 58-9-20 outyielded the standard cultivar Jewel. UC Monarch and AAC Evelyn produced exceptionally large fruit.

In Ontario, day-neutral strawberries 19-140R and UC Golden Gate had the highest marketable yields among evaluated cultivars. In Quebec, 19-011R and 19-106R showed strong agronomic performance, while Seascape and Murano received the highest flavour ratings.

For blueberries, across multiple locations it was found that advanced selection OREGON-000-1, newer cultivars Valor and ArabellaBlue and several B.C. breeding selections demonstrated yield potential equal to or greater than leading commercial standards. In Ontario, OREGON-000-1, LunaBlue, and Valor were among the highest-yielding varieties. In B.C. on-farm trials, advanced selections BC-015 and BC-016 produced exceptionally high first-crop yields and attracted substantial grower interest.





Strawberry plant rows at the new strawberry field plots at AAFC Kentville.



Strawberries at the new strawberry field plots at AAFC Kentville.

Photos: AAFC

With raspberries, several B.C. Berry Breeding Program selections continued to show strong promise, including BC 10-79-33, BC 1855.11 and BC 1855.14. The varieties are showing high yield potential, desirable fruit quality and firmness characteristics.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- In Quebec, AAFC June-bearing strawberry selection K15-11 produced the highest total yield and was among the largest fruit sizes while maintaining a low proportion of unmarketable fruit during the 2024 growing season.
- In Nova Scotia, K15-11, K16-21, and SC 58-9-20 strawberry varieties outyielded the standard cultivar Jewel. UC Monarch and AAC Evelyn produced large fruits.
- In Ontario, day-neutral strawberries 19-140R and UC Golden Gate had the highest marketable yields.
- In Quebec, strawberry varieties 19-011R and 19-106R showed strong agronomic performance, while Seascape and Murano received the highest flavour ratings.
- For blueberries, OREGON-000-1, Valor, ArabellaBlue, and several B.C. breeding selections demonstrated yield potential equal to or greater than leading commercial standards.
- In Ontario, OREGON-000-1, LunaBlue and Valor were among the highest-yielding blueberry varieties.
- In B.C. on-farm trials, advanced blueberry selections BC-015 and BC-016 produced exceptionally high first-crop yields and attracted substantial grower interest.
- Several B.C. Berry Breeding Program raspberry selections continued to show strong promise, including BC 10-79-33, BC 1855.11 and BC 1855.14.

