

The Ontario Berry Grower

November 2007

North American Strawberry Growers Association Annual Meeting and Conference January 29-31, 2008 in Hershey, Pennsylvania

The North American Strawberry Growers Association (NASGA) will hold its annual conference January 29-31, 2008 in Hershey, Pennsylvania. This special **North American Berry Conference** is a cooperative event with the North American Bramble Growers Association, and will be held in conjunction with the regional Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention.

Attendees will have a tremendous amount of selection between sessions, tours and workshops over the three days of this conference. Growers are encouraged to bring their spouse, family members and staff to take in as much information as possible.

On Tuesday, January 29th there will be a tour of local farms, research facilities, and other agri-business in the area and of course a tour of Chocolate World. Those not interested in the tour can participate in an all-day workshop on Fundamentals of Berry Production or attend any of the other sessions offered as part of the Mid Atlantic Conference.

Day 2: Wednesday, January 30, features a “Grower Showcase” presentation from Sand Hill Berries of Mt. Pleasant, PA, one of the region’s leading berry producers. Strawberry topics include an in-depth look at day neutral production, pest management discussions as well as a look at up and coming new strawberry varieties. In the evening, a Berry Film Festival will be held.

Day 3 On Thursday, January 31, the “Showcase Farm” will be Crow’s Nest Farm in Blacksburg, VA, the farm of retired Virginia Tech extension horticulturalist Charlie O’Dell. Strawberry topics plasticulture, weed management and vertical growing systems. Attendees can also participate in the bramble sessions, blueberry session or any of the other sessions offered as part of the conference.

NASGA Membership Benefit: One free conference registration will be provided to all members who submit their membership dues prior to December 31, 2007.

A large trade show and poster display will be held throughout the conference. The conference will be at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Hershey is located 15 minutes from Harrisburg International Airport (HIA), served by seven major airlines; the Lodge offers shuttle service for a small fee. Baltimore-Washington Airport (BWI) is about 90 minutes away.

This conference has tremendous value to all those who participate! Many consider the biggest value is the networking among other growers, researchers and extension. Don’t miss this great opportunity.

For more information regarding the conference or an updated agenda contact Kevin Schooley at 613-258-4587, info@nasga.org or visit the NASGA website at www.nasga.org



IN THIS ISSUE...

- Reducing common groundsel in strawberry fields
- What’s new in fall raspberries
- Hoophouse systems extend bramble harvest
- International Strawberry Symposium
- Ethnic Market Potential and New Crop Possibilities Conference

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs



Reducing common groundsel in strawberry fields

Leslie Huffman, Weed Management Specialist (Horticultural Crops)

Common groundsel is an annual weed that continues to cause problems for strawberry and vegetable growers. It is a fairly short weed, with slightly fleshy leaves similar to dandelion. Like its cousins in the Composite family, groundsel has a distinctive composite flower with many florets. Look for the cluster of small yellow flowers that quickly shed an abundance of seeds, flying away on the wind.

The problem is that groundsel can germinate, flower and shed seed in a very short time, especially under warm conditions. We often find very tiny plants with flowers and seeds shortly after mowing. These seeds continue the cycle, as they are not dormant and germinate almost immediately after hitting the ground. Usually 50% of the seeds germinate immediately after dispersal.

Common groundsel is a particular problem for strawberry growers because our common strawberry herbicides – Treflan, Sinbar, and 2,4-D – do not control it well. So growers who notice a few small plants in the spring may find their field totally covered in common groundsel by the fall, and many strawberry fields have been removed a year or two early because of common groundsel.

Fortunately, Devrinol herbicide will prevent groundsel germination. Our strategy in strawberries has been to target Devrinol in early September for winter annuals.

Recent research in Ohio has shown that groundsel that germinates in the fall produce seeds with a longer dormancy that will persist in the seedbank. This study also showed that 94% of groundsel seed that is buried will either germinate or die within 24 months. This indicates that a focused effort for 2 years can practically eliminate groundsel, especially if control efforts are focused in the fall.

Several approaches will be needed to reduce common groundsel:

- Frequent cultivation in the year of planting are needed. Groundsel seedlings are most susceptible to cultivation before the first true leaf, and can easily re-root if cultivation is delayed until weeds are larger.
- Application of Devrinol at Labour Day (followed by irrigation if ½” of rain does not fall) will prevent establishment of winter annual forms that produce dormant seed.
- Using Lontrel in your renovation program will reduce groundsel, although weeds that have already formed seeds will continue to shed them.
- Using Sinbar regularly also reduces groundsel to some extent.
- Hand weeding of groundsel escapes will be important, especially on new fields, and during the early fall.

Where groundsel has become a severe problem, growers have had success in switching to a reduced-till system using chemical renovation (ie. narrowing rows with Gramoxone, with no soil tillage). By the 2nd year, groundsel problems have been drastically reduced, especially if weed escapes are removed as well.

We know that several approaches are needed to manage common groundsel, and focusing efforts to eliminate the fall population will help reduce long-term problems. Another example where knowledge of the weed’s biology can help us achieve the control level we need.



Common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*) can be significantly reduced with diligent prevention efforts over 2 years



Dandelion and other broadleaf weeds can be controlled with post-harvest applications of 2,4-D in orchards and after renovation in strawberries

What's new in fall raspberries

Pam Fisher, Berry Crop Specialist

The fall raspberry scene has progressed far beyond Heritage – which is a great berry, but too late for many Ontario growers. Here are some other fall-bearing varieties of interest:

Anne (University of Maryland) This variety is yellow, sometimes greenish-yellow, with no pink or amber tinges. Produces large, conic, pale yellow fruit that ripen mid- to late season. It has very good flavor and texture. Tall upright canes sucker sparsely requiring higher planting density. It is resistant to Phytophthora root rot but susceptible to leaf hoppers and rust.

Autumn Bliss (England, 1984) Early, approximately 10 days earlier than Heritage. Large, flavourful fruit with large drupelets. Most yield is harvested in the first two weeks of harvest. Somewhat soft. May be crumbly and dark.

Autumn Britten (England, 1995) A sibling of Autumn Bliss, Autumn Britten is the Ontario standard. It is more regular in shape and less crumbly than Autumn Bliss. Requires planting at closer spacings because it does not produce an abundance of canes.

Caroline (USDA Maryland, 1999) Excellent yield potential, berry size and fruit quality. Yields approx. 1 week earlier than Heritage but too late for most regions in Ontario. Susceptible to late leaf rust, but has moderate to good resistance to Phytophthora.

Polana (Poland, 1991) Approximately 2 weeks earlier than Heritage and slightly ahead of Autumn Britten. Early, fall bearing. High yields because buds produce 2 fruiting laterals each. Medium sized fruit of good quality. Susceptible to Phytophthora and verticillium.

New for trials: The following 5 varieties (except Josephine) are new and on trial at 3 observation plots in Ontario, planted in 2007.

Himbo Top (Switzerland) produces good quality, large fruit on primocanes. The fruit is bright red with good flavor. Plants are vigorous and upright and medium in height that will benefit from trellising. Reported to be resistant to Phytophthora root rot.

Jaclyn (University of Maryland) is an early season variety with large firm berries ripening 2 weeks before Heritage. Plants are vigorous and erect but susceptible to yellow leaf rust. Fruit is dark red and adheres tightly until fully ripe.

Joan J (United Kingdom) Good quality firm fruit with small drupelets and good flavor. The fruit will hold and ship well, as it is dry. Considered early.

Josephine (University of Maryland) Fruit is large with average flavor ripening mid-season. Berries are firm and cohesive. Plants are upright and vigorous needing little containment trellising. It is resistant to leaf hopper and Phytophthora root rot.



Figure 1: Josephine raspberry fruit in high tunnels at Cornell University.

Polka (Poland) has medium large primocane fruit that ripen in the early season. Widely grown in Europe, it is reported to have good fruit quality and good yields.

Thanks to Courtney Weber, Associate Professor, Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station for the descriptions for Anne, Himbo, Polka, Jaclyn, Josephine, from "*Raspberry Variety Review: Old Reliable And New Potential*" in New York Berry Times Vol 6 # 7 July 2007

Here are some links of interest:

New York: New York Berry Times Vol 6 # 7 July 2007
<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/extension/tfabp/newslett.shtml>

Ontario: Variety Descriptions: Raspberry
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/raspvarc.htm>

British Columbia: Raspberry varieties
http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/berries/production_guide_pdf/raspberry_variety_newplant.pdf

Michigan: Raspberry Variety testing at MSU
<http://www.canr.msu.edu/vanburen/raspvar.htm>

Hoophouse systems extend bramble harvest

ITHACA, N.Y. – Northeast growers can capture more of the lucrative local market for fresh berries by growing brambles (raspberries and blackberries) in high tunnels, according to researchers at Cornell and Pennsylvania State Universities.

These relatively low-cost, usually unheated, plastic-covered hoophouses can help growers fill late-spring and late-fall gaps in the market. Instead of mid-June, high-tunnel berries can be harvested in May. The field-grown season for brambles usually ends in early October. But growers using high tunnels continue to harvest berries through November.

Other benefits of high tunnels include:

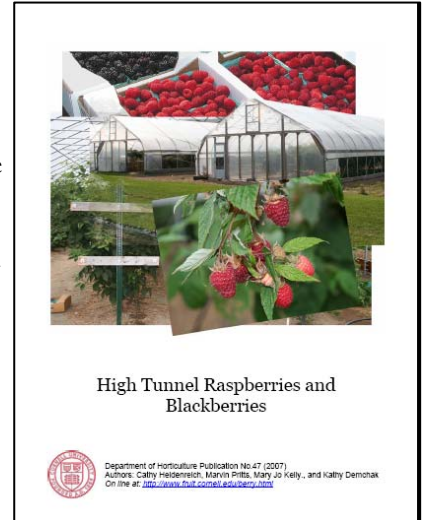
- Floricane-fruiting raspberries and blackberries can overwinter in climates where they would otherwise be killed by cold temperatures.
- Primocane-fruiting blackberries ripen where the growing season is otherwise too short.
- Berry yields from tunnels can be two to three times greater than field-grown, and the berries can be significantly larger.
- Tunnel-grown berries also have longer shelf-life with reduced pesticide inputs.

A new publication, *High Tunnel Raspberries and Blackberries*, spells out in detail how it's done. The 29-page guide is available online at www.fruit.cornell.edu/Berries. Or you can order hard copies.

Topics covered include:

- Site selection
- Tunnel types and construction
- Choosing and establishing plants
- In-ground and container plantings
- Care and management
- Season extension and harvesting
- Budget for in-ground high tunnel raspberries

To order hard copies of these publications, send check (payable to Cornell University) for \$10 for the high tunnel guide or \$9.50 for the greenhouse guide to: Max Welcome, Dept. of Horticulture, 134A Plant Science Bldg., Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853-5904



International Strawberry Symposium

The VI International Strawberry Symposium (VI ISS) will be held in Huelva (Spain), one of the most important strawberry production areas in the world, from 3rd to 7th March, 2008. The Symposium's motto "Quality, Health and Environment" emphasizes the importance of walking together to achieve a high quality crop, influencing well-being and health; within the framework of sustainable and environmentally friendly horticulture.

The Scientific Program includes four days of oral plenary sessions and panel presentations, as well as speeches by world wide first class invited speakers and one day of technical visits. The VI ISS aims to be an international meeting forum for researchers, academics, technicians, students, sales representatives and other professionals of the strawberry sector, and hence it will allow the exchange of research results and the debate on the latest advances.

The chosen venue to host the VI ISS has been recently built and has state-of-the-art technologies, excellent exhibition areas, etc., with direct beach access, in a perfect setting of the Huelva coast.

The Scientific Program is a key point connecting academics and professionals of the strawberry sector. Technical visits to farms, research centres and industries will be held on Wednesday 5th.

<http://www.iss2008spain.com/>

Ethnic Market Potential and New Crop Possibilities Conference

Growers are invited to attend an in depth conference on “Ethnic Market Potential and New Crop Possibilities”. This one day grower session (first day of the 3 day conference) features key note speaker, Bill Sciarappa, agricultural extension agent from Rutgers University. Dr Sciarappa spoke at last year’s session on Global Food Trends at the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Conference. The Ontario Institute of Agrologists; FarmStart; Durham Region Economic Development; and the Centre for Land and Water Stewardship, with support from the Agricultural Management Institute have brought back Dr. Sciarappa with a broad team of experts to explore and to focus on creating a new market for ethnic specialty crops to meet the emerging ethnic population changes in the Northeast USA. This is conference not to miss.

Date: Tuesday, November 27th
Time: 8:30a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Location: Blackstock Recreation Centre,
3440 Church Street, Blackstock
Cost: \$20, which includes lunch

Contact :
For more details and registration, please visit www.farmstart.ca; or contact Melissa Benner, melissa@farmstart.ca; (519) 836-7046 ext. 104

MARK YOUR CALENDARS.....

- November 27, 2007: Ethnic Market Potential and New Crop Possibilities Conference, Blackstock, Ontario melissa@farmstart.ca;
- Jan 29-31, 2008: North American Strawberry Growers Annual Conference: Hershey Pennsylvania, in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention <http://www.nasga.org/>
- Feb 19-20, 2008: Ontario Berry Growers Association Annual Meeting, in conjunction with the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference. <http://www.ontarioberries.com/>
- February 20-21, 2008: Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference. Brock University, St Catharines, ON <http://www.ofvc.ca/>

THE ONTARIO BERRY GROWER IS EDITED BY:

Pam Fisher
Berry Crop Specialist, OMAFRA,
Box 587, Simcoe, ON N3Y 4N5
519-426-2238
pam.fisher@ontario.ca

Margaret Appleby
IPM Systems Specialist, OMAFRA
95 Dundas St., R.R.#3, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0
613-475-5850
margaret.appleby@ontario.ca

Also contributing this month:

Leslie Huffman
Weed Management- Horticulture Crops
OMAFRA, Harrow, ON NOR 1G0
519-738-1256
leslie.huffman@ontario.ca

Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300
E-mail: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca
Northern Ontario Regional Office: 1-800-461-6132

www.ontario.ca/omafra