

Workshop Title: Fruits With Organic Potential For The Maritimes
Growing Tips

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Executive Summary: An overview of growing fruits that are hardy, easy to take care of, and of good quality.

People think you can just plant trees and they'll just grow and bare fruit. It doesn't work that way.

Recommend: Try several fruits crops. Choose varieties that spread out harvest and cash flow. Develop what is best to emphasize.

Early:

Haskap

Strawberries

Saskatoons

Mid:

Haskap

Raspberries

Sour cherries

Black Currants

Late:

Day neutral strawberries

Fall bearing raspeberries

Super Cold Hardy:

Haskap, saskatoons, black currants, chokecherries, seabuckthorn

Seabuckthorn

Advantages:

Extremely hardy

Drought tolerant

Fixes nitrogen

Beautiful

Disadvantages:

Male and female plants

Invasive, spreading, too vigorous (need to prune it, to cut down on suckering)

Hard to harvest: fruit doesn't detach, thorns. Thorns that will go through your leather gloves. Vigourous thorns!

Products and markets:

Advantages:

High in soluble vitamins

Cosmetic use

Juice is like an orange

Brilliant colour

Much publicity.

Disadvantages:

Seedy

Very sour, needs sugar

Not well known (although there's free publicity for unknown fruits).

Tips:

German growers cut entire branches to harvest fruit. Feed it into a machine that crushes berries. Takes 2 years to regrow for another crop. If you do that in Canada, you'll kill plants, so it's recommended to take 3 year break between taking off branches.

Don't wait to freeze, cause you'll get rancid oil. If you wait for it to freeze on the branches (easy to harvest) the oil will have gone rancid.

You can use an apple press. Cut off branches and use the apple press. By weight (counting branches and leaves) 60% was juice.

Blends well with sweet juices like apple and grape.

Naturally high in oil: salad dressing?

Can make tea from leaves. Taste like lemony black tea.

ChokeCherry

Advantages:

Hardy, productive

Health value?

Very high oil content. Could produce more oil for biofuels than any product in the world!

Oil is medicinal, only in small quantities.

Disadvantages:

Black Knot

Tall trees are hard to harvest

Poisonous leaves

Oil is toxic

Black Knot:

Most prevalent in chokecherries.

Only treatment is pruning. Need to cut a few inches from where it's infected.
Need to disinfect pruners regularly.

Black Currants

Mainly used for juice
Strong flavour that isn't too popular in North America, often used to add colour.
Stems and dried flowers stay on fruit.
Can be mechanically harvested.

Bred to be more cold hardy: apples, sour cherries, plums, pears, raspberries, grapes.

Have to be more careful about where you get them to avoid winter damage.
Where were they bred?
Where do they grow well?
Are they well tested?
Do they need special care to survive?
Plant a few, if they do well, plant more.

Biennial Mowing of Summer Raspberries

Year 1: In spring, mow all canes to the ground.
Thin or cultivate rows to keep canes to an acceptable density

Year 2: Fruiting year

Have 2 fields and alternate between year 1 and 2. This will result in less pest pressure and disease.

Can test with pruning different heights and getting fruit later in the season.

Shift rows over slightly every year by mowing on one side, and keeping suckers on other side. That way, you slowly move plants to new ground.

Groundcover fruits: Need insulation of snow or straw to survive winter. Strawberries, sandcherries, many other wild berries.

Found in disturbance zones (fires, floods, construction). Wetlands, mountain tops, rocky areas with little soil.

Problems: weeds, most have low yield

Cross Pollination

Self Compatibles (need only one variety)

Strawberry

Saskatoon

Raspberries
Sour Cherries

Self-incompatible (need two compatible varieties)

Haskaps
Currants
Apples
Plums
Sandcherries

Marketing

If you want to do this, need to think of your market first.

What crops go well together?

Ones that have a similar product and/or similar market. Ones with different harvest season (not harvesting everything at once).

Easiest for new people:

Berries (you don't have to wait as long), less pruning, smaller plants.

For upicks:

June: Haskap

July: Saskatoon, strawberries and haskap

August: Sour cherries and raspberries.

Upick advice:

Tree fruits are a bad idea because they'll usually make a mess of the trees. Fruit is also often wasted.

Early varieties are best. People are gung-ho early in the season.

Use your upick to bring people and then get their money with more stuff: café, garden centre, baked goods, wine tasting, etc.

Good, clear signs.

Plant so customers can see many fruits from the road.

Have earliest to ripen fruit at back (customers walk through other fruits to get at it).

Strong promotion early in season

Free publicity: charity, parades, donate fruits, school tours, april fools stunts.

Dried fruit, jam, juice, u-pick, pies

Mechanical Harvesting

Need something that ripens at the same time

Comes off when shaken

Firm.

Don't sell fruit fresh, just for processing.

Fast harvesting at right time, therefore less fruit rot

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If there's a disease that's going to spread, machine will spread it.