

## **Workshop Title:**

Emerging Opportunities: Growing Biodynamic Haskap Berries

## **Speaker(s) & their titles:**

Logie Cassell, LaHave Forests <lahaveforests.com>

## **Executive Summary :**

Logie and LaHave Forests are establishing a biodynamic farm in Nova Scotia that is geared towards growing haskap berries. Though the berry is just emerging in the North American market, it may well become the most popular berry on the market in 30-50 years, due to its great taste and extraordinary health benefits.

## **Notes :**

### **History and Market:**

- the haskap berry is part of the honeysuckle family. Also known as blue honeysuckle, honeyberry, twin berry honeysuckle, sweet berry honeysuckle, honeyberry
- native to the boreal regions of North America. Commercially grown in Japan, somewhat in Russia. It is found wild in Nova Scotia
- in Japan the haskap has been grown commercially for thousands of years. It is regarded as part of the Japanese formula for eternal youth, as sells for \$20-\$30 per pound fresh
- the industry is beginning to move to Canada due to Japanese urban sprawl and demographic issues. North American, Russian and Japanese varieties of the haskap were cross-pollinated to create a new variety that can grow in Saskatchewan
- in North America the health benefits of the haskap will drive the market. The berry is higher in antioxidants than any other berry (3-4 x higher than wild blueberries, and higher in calcium and phosphorus. 3x higher in vitamin C than oranges)
- in 30-50 years the haskap berry may well be the most common variety of berry on the North American market, and could even surpass the blueberry in popularity. It tastes good and is extremely healthy

### **Varieties of Haskaps:**

- the targets for the new Saskatchewan variety is a berry that is fast-growing, good flavoured, well-suited to value-added products (juice, wine, jam, smoothies, pies), mechanically harvestable (even ripening, easy to shake off plant), mechanically handled (firm with non-tearing skin, large and round fruit)
- other varieties include the Indigo Gem, Tundra, "Berry" Smart Blue, Borealis

### **Seasonal Cycle of the Haskap Berry:**

- late March = first green buds
- mid April = flower buds

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- early May = flowers
- early June = berries mature

**Growing:**

- LaHave Forests is using a biodynamic model that starts with the soil. They are fairly new and have not yet established many biodynamic principals, but that will come with time and many biodynamic ideas are already in motion. Logie particularly emphasizes the importance of good soil health
- Nova Scotia is one of the best places in Canada to grow haskaps. The province has a growing season of 210 days, and little need for irrigation as it has lots of seasonal rainfall
- spacing of 10 foot rows (so tractor can get through) with plants spaced every 3 feet
- need lots of natural fertilizer in the spring and fall
- pruned similar to a rosebush. Cut the center stem out every few years
- use gypsum instead of lime, it's better for the soil
- 4<sup>th</sup> growing year is peak production (~8lb per plant). In Nova Scotia hakaps sell for \$8 per pound fresh, \$5 per pound frozen