

Insects are not likely to overwinter well in this system since the pots are removed each year and put into storage. This limits the refugia for overwintering.

OUTREACH

This project included two outreach events. The first was a twilight meeting which was held on July 25th and was attended by 30 growers. Growers were able to see the system in place and in production. There were several growers who seemed to find the system appealing. The second event was a talk as part of the New England Vegetable and Berry Growers meeting on January 7th, 2003. This talk was attended by 260 growers and presented final yield and production cost information. Again, several growers approached the speaker after the talk seeking further information about this system.

In addition to these meetings, a written account of the project will be posted on the UMass Fruit Program website. An article will be published in the Massachusetts Berry Notes Newsletter in Feb. 2003.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- 1) One discovery was that a March delivery date of the long-canes from the nursery is too early. It is better to have the plants held as long as possible by the nursery and time arrival for about 4 weeks from when you want to place them out in the field. Late-May is a good target window for setting the plants out in the field.
- 2) The first year of production, at best the returns would only cover the costs. But, subsequent years, the plants return approximately 10 each in profit. At a 10 ft. row spacing, this could translate to about \$40,000 per acre (if price is \$2.50 per half pint).
 - It's important to remember that in the field grown system, the first year yields no fruit and therefore not payback for the initial investment.
- 3) One of the limitations of the system is efficient distribution to high-end markets. A lot of profit can be eaten up if the grower has to drive small orders to many locations. An infrastructure for distribution that doesn't disproportionately eat into the profits is going to be important for growing this system.
- 4) 'Tulameen' raspberries are beginning to have their own identity in the marketplace (similar to 'McIntosh' apples). This name recognition will help with the marketing of this fruit.
- 5) Another group of plants that were originally grown from tissue culture plugs in 2001 was also included in this trial, though data were not reported. This is because the yields were poor.
- 6) A small number of miscellaneous bramble plants were also grown out in pots this year. These included 'Kiowa' blackberry, 'Marionberry', 'Boysenberry', and 'Loch Ness'. These varieties were not available in long canes, so the plants were grown out for fruiting in 2003. The growth habit of these plants is very different than red raspberries. The canes are very long and trailing and THORNY (except 'Loch Ness'). They will require some special handling for this system. They also sent down very substantial roots into the soil beneath the pots which made it difficult to move the pots when the time came. This will need to be addressed in future plantings with some sort of barrier.
- 7) An idea was formulated for the ultimate sale of the potted plants to homeowners via garden centers as 'patio raspberries', further recovering some of the investment costs. This may prove to be the most lucrative part of the system.