

NEW YORK FRUIT QUARTERLY

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Editorial

The Future of the New York Berry Industry

The future of the New York berry industry is very bright. In fact, berries should be considered the fruit for the new millennium! They are nutritious and have special nutraceutical value. Berries are not only beautiful to behold but versatile and easy to use. People of all ages enjoy berries. They are truly mouth poppers.

God definitely put blueberries on earth for the new millennium. They are certainly environmentally friendly to grow, process, and use. They are the ultimate convenience fruit. They wait on the bush until it is convenient for them to be used. In the process of waiting to be used, people walking by pop them in their mouth. This same disappearing act occurs when frozen blueberries are left on the counter on their way into muffins or pancakes. They have their unique growing requirements and cannot be grown in all soils in the state, but they can be a profitable crop where grown well. (An article by Dr. Marvin Pritts on page 14 details the unique mineral nutrition requirement of blueberries.)

It is no wonder then that the demand for berries continues to increase. Berry growers have a number of things going for them. Most of the crop in New York State is sold via direct market through u-pick or farm markets to affluent consumers. Since berry crops are grown in most counties of the state they are truly locally grown. Consumers can see and talk to the farmer, and have a farm experience in getting their berries. The value-added benefits of berries in jams, jellies, and wines have great potential.

Our industry continues to have challenges. Perhaps the most important include a short harvest season combined with the short shelf life of picked strawberries and raspberries; vexing disease problems such as black root rot of strawberries; and continuing severe wildlife damage caused by deer, turkeys, and song birds. The greatest societal change affecting our industry is that fewer people are opting for u-pick berries and prefer that berries be picked for them. Therefore, the most important management skill of tomorrow's New York berry grower must include the talent to recruit and manage labor to harvest our quality crop of great tasting berries, the fruit for the new millennium!

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CONTENTS

Field Evaluations of Flint and Sovran for Controlling Apple Diseases

David Rosenberger.....5

Marketing Apple Products

Kristin Rowles, Brian Henehan,
and Gerald White.....10

Blueberry Nutrition on Upland Soils

Marvin Pritts.....14

Effects of Multiple Asana Applications on Secondary Mite Outbreaks

R. W. Straub, A. Agnello, and
H. R. Reissig.....20

Effects of ReTain, Nitrogen Fertilization, and Mid-summer Trunk Scoring on Fruit Color and Quality of 'Jonagold' Apples

James M. Wargo, Ian A. Merwin,
and Chris B. Watkins.....24

ABOUT THE COVERS

Front cover: Blueberries are healthy, nutritious, and tasty fruits. They may provide economic opportunities for fruit growers to diversify. They have special soilnutritional requirements. See article by Marvin Pritts on page 14.

Back cover: Research on apple processed products is featured in the article by Kristin Rowles on page 10.

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