

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Pilot Project Means Greater Availability of Local Raspberries for Nova Scotians

Kentville, Nova Scotia – A project testing a new way to grow raspberries could extend the local growing season from three weeks to up to four months, meaning Nova Scotians could enjoy local raspberries for a longer period annually. This could decrease the reliance on imported berries, as well as help farmers address the increasing effects of climate change on locally grown crops.

The Provincial Long Cane Raspberry project has been piloted by Vital Berry Farms in Sheffield Mills and Webster Farms Ltd. in Cambridge and is led by Horticulture Nova Scotia and Perennia. The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture provided the funding required to implement this project, which included the construction and planting of tall, caned raspberry plants in soilless pots in large semi-permanent tunnels. This production method is a cost-effective option to grow new varieties and control the environment for plants without the expense of a permanent greenhouse.

The tunnels extend the berries' growing season by allowing for warmer temperatures in the spring and fall and protect plants from rainfall that can spread disease and reduce quality. The season for traditional field raspberries averages three weeks, from mid-July through the first week of August. Long cane raspberries grown in a tunnel, however, can provide fruit for up to four months, from early July through the end of October.

This system helps mitigate the impact of climate change by allowing for the collection of rainwater for irrigation and allows for precise control over the amount and timing of nutrient delivery to the plants. As the berries are not grown in traditional soil there are fewer risks associated with soil-borne diseases that accumulate year-to-year.

Perennia specialists have been collecting data and working with the cooperating farms on technical support and monitoring and have also contracted with a leading expert in this production system from the Netherlands to be an advisor for this two-year project that ends this year.

The Province of Nova Scotia invested over \$300,000 in the project over two years.

QUOTES

“This is an example of how the Province and industry are working together to address real-world issues and opportunities. The Province is aiming for Nova Scotians to spend 20 per cent of their annual grocery spending on locally produced foods by 2030, and a longer local raspberry season supports this goal in an innovative, and delicious, way.”

- The Honourable Greg Morrow, Nova Scotia Minister of Agriculture

“As the industry association focused on supporting and growing our horticulture sector, leading projects like these is vital to our industry's next chapter. They help farmers diversify into new markets, increase revenue, and address the ongoing issues of climate change.”

- Marlene Huntley, Executive Director, Horticulture Nova Scotia

“Using applied research and technical expertise to find practical solutions for both industry and government is a huge part of what Perennia does. Bringing new local products to market and mitigating the impact of a changing climate on our food sectors has been, and will continue to be, a priority for us in all areas.”

- Lynne Godlien, CEO, Perennia

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High resolution photos owned by Perennia of long cane raspberry systems in Nova Scotia are available

www.perennia.ca

ABOUT PERENNIA

Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc. is a provincial development agency with the mission to support growth, transformation and economic development in Nova Scotia’s agriculture, seafood, cannabis and food and beverage sectors.

ABOUT HORTICULTURE NOVA SCOTIA

Horticulture Nova Scotia is a non-profit organization representing the interests of vegetable, greenhouse vegetable, strawberry, highbush blueberry, and bramble growers in Nova Scotia.