

HASKAP DAY 2012

The sun shone brightly over the University of Saskatchewan Horticulture Research Station after a week of rain showers. Some folks donned disposable plastic boots (shopping bags!) while others gingerly made their way over the driest paths of heavy clay soil.



Canadian blue honeysuckle



Netted Borealis



*Dr. Maxine Thompson & Dave Negrych
(Haskap Canada grower)*

Dr. Bob led the tour, past the collection of wild Canadian blue honeysuckle to the rows of Japanese selections, and on to the patch where Borealis, Tundra, and the Indigo series are well into their 4th season of growth. Birds had stripped the outer rows, but some bushes were netted plus the plots were large enough so that plenty of well-ripened berries were left for us to sample.

Several of the new trial cultivars are producing much larger berries full of rich flavor. Should they do well in the propagation trials, a new release could be ready for market by the spring of 2014. However, one of the challenges of a wet year is that it is more difficult to produce clean tissue cultures from the mother plant.



Borealis berry next to Russian/Japanese cross

Following a delicious lunch featuring salad greens with haskap vinaigrette dressing, pork with haskap topping, and everyone's favorite – haskap ice cream for dessert (thanks again Curtis & Leslie from Haskap Central Sales), the crowd was treated to several presentations. Dr. Artem Sorokin reported that breeding is continuing at several sites in Russia. Dr. Maxine Thompson from Oregon has several advanced selections of Japanese haskap on trial that may be released after a few more years of evaluations. Grad student Eric Gerbrandt is working in British Columbia where he will be able to evaluate the suitability of various cultivars for coastal climates, and James Dawson's analysis continues to show Borealis and Tundra to be extremely high in their anti-oxidant properties.

Special thanks to the U of S team who hosted Haskap Day 2012 in conjunction with the North American Fruit Exchange (NAFEX) conference.

By Bernis Ingvaldson, HaskapUSA