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History

The red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) is indigenous to Asia Minor and North America. Fruits were gathered from the wild by the people of Troy in the foothills of Mt. Ida around the time of Christ. Records of domestication were found in 4th century writings of Palladius, a Roman agriculturist, and seeds have been discovered at Roman forts in Britain. Therefore, the Romans are thought to have spread cultivation throughout Europe.

In Medieval Europe, wild berries were considered both medicinal and utilitarian. Their juices were used in paintings and illuminated manuscripts. During this period, only the rich partook of their tasty bounty. King Edward I (1272 - 1307) is recognized as the first person to call for the cultivation of berries; and by the seventeenth century, British gardens were rich with berries and berry bushes. By the eighteenth century, berry cultivation practices had spread throughout Europe.

When settlers from Europe came to America, they found Native Americans already utilizing and eating berries. Due to the nomadic nature of this culture, berries were dried for preservation and ease of transportation. Settlers also brought cultivated raspberries that were native to Europe with them to the new colonies. The first commercial nursery plants were sold by William Price in 1771.

In 1761, George Washington moved to his estate in Mount Vernon where he began to cultivate berries in his extensive gardens. By 1867 over 40 different varieties were known. After the Civil War, major production areas emerged in the regions of New York, Michigan, Oregon, Washington, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana. By 1880, approximately 2,000 acres were in cultivation.

Today, the leading producing regions for red raspberries are Washington, Oregon and California. However, at over 70 million pounds per year grown on 9,600 acres, Washington accounts for over 70% of the U.S. production of frozen red raspberries.

Cultivars

Although most of the berries grown in Washington are Meekers, there are small amounts of many other cultivars that are grown. Peerbolt Crop Management is currently creating on-farm trials of promising cultivars.

The following is a description compiled by Pat Moore, Washington State University Small Fruits Plant Breeder, of just some of the more than 20 varieties grown in Washington. Unless otherwise mentioned, all are susceptible to Root Rot and should be grown only on well-drained sites, and all are susceptible to Raspberry Bushy Dwarf Virus (RBDV).

Cascade Bounty was released as a new raspberry cultivar in 2005. It has been extremely productive in trials at WSU Puyallup. Cascade Bounty represents the first machine harvestable summer fruiting raspberry for the

Pacific Northwest with significant levels of Root Rot tolerance, being very vigorous and producing high yields where most other cultivars do not survive. It also appears to have very good levels of cold hardiness. Machine harvest evaluations indicate that it machine harvests well, but the fruit does not have sufficient cohesion for IQF use. Because of the size, softness and acidity of Cascade Bounty, it is not recommended for fresh use.

Autumn Bliss is an early season, fall fruiting variety from the East Malling breeding program. Fruit is produced two to three weeks before Heritage. Fruit can get dark if not picked on a tight schedule. Fruit quality in August is good, but deteriorates later in the season.

Caroline is a new fall fruiting cultivar released by the University of Maryland breeding program. It is supposed to produce large fruit one to three weeks earlier than Heritage.

Cascade Delight was released as a new raspberry cultivar in 2003. It is productive, with long fruiting laterals producing large, firm fruit. The fruiting season and productivity is very similar to Tulameen, though fruit size and firmness are greater. In research plots at WSU Mt. Vernon and Puyallup, it was very vigorous and withstood Root Rot where Tulameen, Meeker, Qualicum, and Comox could not.

Chemainus is a mid-season processing type that produces medium-large sized, medium-dark colored berries. It machine harvests well and can be used for processing and IQF. It can also be used for fresh market.

Coho was released in 1998 as a late season cultivar, ripening after Meeker. It is productive with large fruit that separate easily from the plant. Because of its time of ripening, it is most suited to fresh production. However, growers report that it is excellent as individual quick frozen (IQF) fruit. It is very susceptible to root rot.

Cowichan is a new cultivar that was released in 2001 by Agriculture AgriFood Canada. It has been resistant to Root Rot in greenhouse tests but is quite susceptible in many growers' fields. It appears to be resistant to RBDV. It is machine harvestable, though difficult because it is very vigorous with long laterals.

Malahat ripens at a similar time as Willamette. However, Malahat is much larger, firmer and lighter-colored than Willamette and more productive. Malahat is very susceptible to Root Rot and is susceptible to RBDV.

Heritage is the traditional standard for fall fruiting raspberries. It can be very productive, but in most years in the Pacific Northwest, much of the fruit cannot be used because it is produced too late in the season.

Meeker was developed by Washington State University and released as a new cultivar in 1967. Meeker is vigorous with long fruiting laterals. Modifications to harvesters allowed Meeker to be machine harvested and by the late 1980s, Meeker was the predominate cultivar grown in Washington. Meeker is a sweet raspberry with the delicious flavor one expects, but bred to be stronger withstanding mechanical harvesting without loss of quality. This development has contributed greatly to Washington's elevation in status as one of the largest raspberry producing regions in the world. Meeker is the most widely planted raspberry in Washington and the Pacific Northwest, representing 80 % of the plants sold in Washington in 2003 and averaging almost 70% for 2001-2008. Meeker is a late season, very productive summer fruiting raspberry with excellent traditional raspberry flavor. It is a versatile cultivar with its fruit being usable for fresh, IQF, bulk frozen, juice or puree. Although it is acceptable for local fresh market use, other cultivars are larger and better for longer distance fresh markets. It is particularly sensitive to Root Rot as a new plant, but has more tolerance after it has become well established. RBDV infection causes a reduction in yield and crumbly fruit, which results in a lower grade fruit and reduces the longevity of plantings.

Saanich was released as a new raspberry cultivar around 2005. It is productive with high yields of fruit slightly larger than Meeker that machine harvests well. Saanich is a good IQF berry. Although susceptible to RBDV, it may be slow to become infected.

Summit is a fall fruiting variety that begins production at the same time as Autumn Bliss. Summit is very productive and highly tolerant of Root Rot. Fruit size and quality decline later in the season.

Tulameen is the standard variety for the fresh market throughout the world. It has a large fruit with an excellent, non-traditional raspberry flavor. Because of the large fruit size, it can be difficult to machine harvest.

Willamette is an early-fruited raspberry. It was developed by the Oregon breeding program in the early 1940s. It is one of the few cultivars resistant to RBDV. It has medium-small fruit that can become quite dark. The fruit can be removed from the bush very easily. When there are no other raspberry cultivars in production, Willamette can be sold fresh. Once other cultivars begin fruiting, Willamette is typically sold only for processing uses. Willamette has modest yields. It is not as winter hardy as many other cultivars.

Red Raspberry Salsa

Serves 8

Ingredients

2 cups diced peeled jicama
1 Pink Lady or other tart-sweet apple, cored and diced
1 medium jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely chopped
3 green onions, sliced
1/3 cup raspberry vinegar
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
1 12-ounce bag frozen raspberries, thawed

Instructions

In large bowl toss apple and jicama with vinegar.
Add all remaining ingredients and toss to blend.
Serve at once or cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Nutrition Info: Calories 40 Fat 0g Protein 1g Carbohydrate 10g Cholesterol 0mg Sodium 3mg Fiber 3g