

BRAMBLES AND PROTECTED CULTURE:

State of the Art

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Using new technologies and cultivars, it is now possible to produce raspberries and blackberries year around in cold climates such as those of the New England states. These technologies involve primocane-fruiting raspberries and blackberries that fruit in autumn under field conditions, as well as florican-fruiting raspberries and blackberries that fruit in summer under field conditions. These cultivars, coupled with off-season chilling, unheated high tunnels and heated greenhouses, allow growers to produce very high quality fruit year around.

Year around production can be achieved using the following combinations of cultivar types and technologies:

Late June through early August: Florican-fruiting raspberries in the field

Late July and August: Florican-fruiting blackberries in the field

Late August and September: Primocane-fruiting raspberries in the field

September through November: Primocane-fruiting blackberries and raspberries in high tunnels

December through January: Late-summer-chilled florican-fruiting raspberries and blackberries in greenhouses

February through April: Fall-chilled florican-fruiting raspberries and blackberries in greenhouses

May – June: Florican-fruiting raspberries in high tunnels

The simplest season extension technology is high tunnels. Extending the season of primocane-fruiting raspberries into November seems to be the most promising use of tunnels. Details can be found at:

<http://www.fruit.cornell.edu/Berries/bramblepdf/hightunnelsrasp.pdf>

Some growers have had success fruiting raspberries in greenhouses in winter to obtain very high quality fruit that can be sold for a high price. Details can be found at:

<http://www.fruit.cornell.edu/Berries/bramblehtml/ghrasp.html>

Given the increasing cost of transportation, producing high-value fruits out-of-season is becoming more economical. High tunnels use only solar energy, so supplemental energy inputs are minimal. Winter production in greenhouses does require energy, but raspberries prefer relatively cool growing conditions compared to most greenhouse crops such as tomatoes and cucumbers.

Year around production is now a reality, even in the Northeast.