

Strawberry Variety Performance in Nova Scotia

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The province of Nova Scotia is a most favorable area for strawberry fruit and plant production. Winter temperatures rarely go as low as zero degree Fahrenheit, and normally there is sufficient snow cover to keep the plants well protected. New foliage growth appears in late April and plants remain active until the middle of October. During the summer the average monthly rainfall of three inches is usually adequate, although many growers have irrigation systems for insurance. The summer temperature rarely reaches 100° F. July is our warmest month, with an average temperature of 66° F. This favorable climate is mainly due to the bodies of water which surround this seaside province.

Variety testing of strawberries has been carried on continuously at the Kentville Research Station since its inception in 1911. The Commercial production of fruit in the province is in the order of one million quarts annually, and it forms an important part of the mixed farming that is carried on in the area. Our production problems are similar to those of other areas. The widespread virus disease infection of commercial stocks has been the most serious. This has been successfully dealt with through a co-operative scheme for the production of virus-free plants. One serious disease from which we have escaped is red stele, and this is probably due to our winter conditions.

For many years the varieties Premier and Senator Dunlap were considered to be standards of excellence by Nova Scotia producers. Early in

this Station's history many varieties were compared to Premier and Dunlap, and then discarded. The Premier adapted well to our light sandy soil areas, and the Dunlap was favored by those having heavier soils. The Dunlap and Premier supremacy continued until the introduction of Catskill and Sparkle; and although today they are favored by many, the replacement of Dunlap and Premier has not been complete.

The variety Catskill was introduced to local growers some 20 years ago, and presently constitutes a considerable percentage of the plantings. The variety Sparkle, introduced some 10 years later, has been received with much more acclaim. Many growers find that Catskill is an inconsistent performer. This no doubt is due in part to its susceptibility to virus disease. In numerous instances Catskill has produced 15,000 quarts of fruit per measured acre; but there are many more instances where only a fraction of this quantity was produced. Sparkle

Table 1. Yield data from strawberry variety trials conducted at Kentville Research Station.

Variety	Yield, pounds per acre			
	1957	1958	1959	Avg.
Redcoat	18658	17888	13504	16683
Cavalier	13431	22360	11180	15657
Sparkle	15536	14593	13364	14498
Surecrop	—	15827	12197	14012
Guardsman	13540	11253	12342	12378
Catskill	8131	15275	6824	10077
Earlidawn	7260	9612	4066	6979
Midland	3775	6941	4356	5024
Redstar	—	4429	5227	4828
Strafford	3630	6868	3920	4806

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