



## March 2012 NEWSLETTER

### Presidents Report

*As presented at the AGM in Niagara Falls February 2012*

Welcome to beautiful Niagara Falls, Ontario. It's always interesting to try a new venue for a major convention such as ours and these facilities seem to be fitting our needs very well. Thank you to Kevin Schooley, Pam Fisher, and education committee members who put it all together.

During the past year your directors were busy as usual dealing with the issues that make our industry strong and profitable. The promotions committee has worked diligently to improve the OBGGA website and I'm sure you will agree with me that the many hours of work that went into this project were very worthwhile. Thank you to Will Heeman, Jenn VanDeVelde and Ellen Jennen. There is no more important task for us as growers and as an association that to market our products. The old adage that **"It's not how much we can grow, but how much we can sell"** has never been more relevant.

On that same note, I will only mention the Achene Committee's activities briefly so as not to steal Paul Watson's thunder. Due mainly to the tireless efforts of Becky Hughes and assisted by the Achene team, I feel very confident that Ontario growers have some of the best plant material available to them that can be found anywhere in Canada and, indeed, internationally. The standards for insect and disease control are second to none – this is due to the ongoing efforts of the Achene committee to oversee the plant production process and the close adherence to the guidelines by our Ontario propagator John Cooper at Strawberry Tyme Farms.

Keep in mind also that you can access promotional materials for you farm through Kevin Schooley. I believe Kevin will have more on that topic later.

I would also like to say how much I have enjoyed sitting as a director on the OBGGA. In my opinion there is no better way to learn more about our industry than to meet with other growers from across the province on a regular basis. For any of you considering letting your name stand in the upcoming election today, I can assure you that you would find the experience very rewarding. Most of the work load is carried by our executive secretary Kevin, Pam Fisher, Adam Dale, and Becky Hughes. Board meetings are limited in number to 5 during the year with no meetings from April through August during our busiest season.

In closing, let me say again how fortunate all of you are in this room. Everyone has to eat and in North America eating tends to take place 3 times each day and often at other times as well – eating is BIG business and horticulture is in the forefront of the supply chain for this huge market. I have watched the industry grow and change significantly during my years of involvement and I am confident that you as growers will continue to invest, innovate, and adapt to changing conditions so that you, your families, and your farms will remain competitive and profitable. All the best in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Paul Ralph  
President

### From OBGGA Headquarters

Thanks to all who attended the AGM in Niagara Falls last month. I believe we had the best crowd since I began my tenure with the OBGGA 8 years ago. Either we had a great program or Niagara Falls is a better destination. I think we will be back next year as the rooms and perks at the Embassy Suites proved to be quite popular.

It is a warm day in eastern Ontario and the snow will be gone soon if this keeps up. With warm weather come thoughts of a berry harvest not too far away. This not only means growing the best crop possible but now is a good time of year to think about marketing your berries.

For those who attended either of the berry sessions in Niagara Falls you will know that your Promotion Committee has been hard at work and have met since the conference to start to put things in place for the upcoming season. A list of what will be available to members can be found later in the newsletter.

Order your supplies early. We hope to continue to add value to your OBGA membership. I will be out of the office from March 16- March 31 but hope to have access to email on my travels in Thailand.

All the best!

Kevin

**STRAWBERRY Tyme** **Strawberry & Raspberry Plants**  
ESTABLISHED 1959

Your **ONLY** supplier of strawberry & raspberry plants grown under the guidelines of the **'Ontario Plant Propagation Program'**

All plants grown by us are treated with the Amino Acid **'PHCA'** which helps kick start the plants in the spring when planted.

**Ask us about this amazing fertilizer!**

A followup fertility program which includes **'PHCA'** is highly recommended to maximize the potential of the plant.

**Also available -** Blueberry Plants, Blackberry Canes, Yellow, Purple & Black Raspberry Canes, Asparagus Roots, Rhubarb Roots, Horseradish Roots.

**R.R. #2 Simcoe, ON Canada N3Y 4K1**  
**Phone: 1-519-426-3099 Fax: 1-519-426-2573**  
**www.strawberrytyme.com**

## Achene Report

*As presented at the AGM in Niagara Falls February 2012*

First off I would like to thank the Achene committee members for their time and help over the past year and I would also like to thank Brian Durst and Dave Phillips for joining the Achene committee this year.

The good news is that we are up \$3000 from last year in royalties collected from strawberry and raspberry varieties that OBGA holds the licenses for. Autumn Britten is still number one but it continues to

decrease in sales from competition from varieties such as Polka. Also of note the varieties that Adam Dale bred have also provided a solid source of income for the association.

The propagator inspections went very well this summer with only 2 very small issues, 1 in raspberries and one in strawberries that needed to be addressed. This was very good to see and we feel confident that the propagation program is working well.

We have been working hard to get new varieties license to the OBGA to make it easier for OBGA members to access new varieties. Of note we have been working on Polka a primocane fruiting raspberry and as well we have made inquires about winterstar which is a strawberry variety for Florida but it looks like it could be a very popular variety and could generate some significant income for the association.

The Strawberry Plant Propagation Guidelines have also had some changes this year. We try to review the guidelines on a regular basis to both keep up with changes in the berry industry thus meeting the CFIA requirements. The change of note for this year that we have been working on is the tolerance of nematodes in the propagators field. If the Nematode levels from soil sampling are too high then a plant root sample is taken to see if the nematodes have moved into the roots. If levels are too high in the roots then the plants are turned down for certification and so far this has not happened yet. The allowable level of Nematodes in the soil currently is 100/kg for propagation fields where as for a grower field the recommended threshold is 500/kg.

We are going to be doing further testing if we can find funding and we will also be talking to other researchers and if we can find research to show that lower tolerances would be better we will make the necessary changes.

We have also been working on shipping raspberry plants to the US, and now propagators have access to the US market. As well we are working on being able to ship strawberry plants to the EU but the progress on this is a little slower.

The Plant propagation lab in New Liskeard is starting to get orders from outside Ontario. There have been orders from 7 nurseries outside Ontario and this dramatically helps offset the cost of operating the propagation program and in turn it frees up dollars for research that benefit the Ontario Berry Grower. The reputation of the OBGA is very good and as word gets out there hopefully orders will increase in the future.

Sincerely,  
Paul Watson  
Achene Committee Chair

## OBGA Award of Merit

This year's recipient is a graduate of U of G with a BSc majoring in Ornamental Horticulture. This person also earned a Masters in plant physiology at the U of G.

Over the past 20+ yrs our recipient has been a college lecturer, the manager of a horticultural program at an Ontario college, the head of the horticulture section at an Ontario college, & is now the head of the Northern Horticultural Research Unit, known to us in the berry industry as the SPUD unit, in New Liskeard at the NLARS.

Becky Hughes is the manager of the SPUD unit & is a researcher for the U of G stationed in New Liskeard. She has been with the SPUD unit since it began producing Nuclear seed potatoes for the Ont seed potato industry in 1984.

In the mid nineties the propagation program in Ontario had become very fragmented with parts of the program being carried out in Harrow & parts in Vineland & parts in New Liskeard. The OBGA approached Becky to see if we could move the facilities we were using in Harrow & Vineland to her location in New Liskeard & amalgamate everything in one location. A deal was worked out & the OBGA invested in a screenhouse facility at the site in new Liskeard so Becky could take full control of the beginning stages of the propagation program.

Since this move to New Liskeard the OBGA along with input from Becky, Pam & Adam have designed a program which is second to none anywhere in the world. Becky is

responsible for heat treating, virus indexing, tissue culture production, DNA testing, storage of cultivars no longer being used. She has designed a program that is industry leading & this program has been adopted by the Florida Strawberry Growers Association as the model with which they want to move their industry forward.

Becky has been involved in numerous small fruit research projects as part of the berry research team in Ontario. She has been involved in many projects that have been published as well as been on poster boards at conferences all over North America. In fact she has been involved in so many projects that I can't list them all here today as the list is 6 pages long.



*John Cooper presenting the OBGA Award of Merit to Becky Hughes at the 2012 AGM in Niagara Falls*

It is under the leadership & guidance of Becky Hughes that the OBGA has been able to achieve the status it has in the micropropagation industry in North America. Becky it is my distinct honour to present you with the OBGA Award of Merit for 2012.

## Wildlife Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In Ontario and internationally we have seen the development of public strategies to prevent and manage a wide range of human-wildlife conflicts. In 2008, the Ontario government released a "Strategy for Preventing and Managing Human-Wildlife Conflicts in Ontario" in response to growing public concern about human-wildlife conflicts and to acknowledge the range of values

associated with wildlife. Recently the Ontario government consulted on a “*Strategy for Managing Agriculture-Wildlife Conflicts*”, primarily to enhance information resources available, improve programs and tools for farm producers, and to promote collaboration among government and the public.

What human-wildlife conflicts exist in Ontario you ask? The agricultural community has voiced concern about wildlife damage to crops (birds, raccoon, deer, etc.) and predation on livestock (coyote, raptors, etc.) and are developing best management practices to prevent and minimize wildlife damage and reduce adverse economic impacts. Human health and safety can be threatened by vehicle-wildlife collisions, aircraft-wildlife collisions, spread of zoonotic diseases (e.g., West Nile Disease, Lyme disease, rabies) or direct injury or fatality through contact with wildlife. Impacts by wildlife in urban and suburban areas include structural damage to buildings and landscaping, fouling of parks and recreation areas, and occasionally predation on family pets. Some people are not accustomed to wildlife and are concerned when they observe certain species at or near their home or cottage, or on a municipal walking path (e.g., coyote, bear). In some cases, conflict is about one species of wildlife causing ecological damage to the detriment of other species (e.g., cormorants killing trees in a sensitive habitat where other colonial nesting birds reside).

In Ontario, and jurisdictions worldwide, strategic government directions, policy frameworks, planning exercises and appropriate legislation are beginning to reflect current approaches to prevent and manage human-wildlife conflicts. We could say Ontario has successfully shifted from a 20<sup>th</sup> Century - traditional wildlife management approach, whereby best available knowledge and information was used to ensure wildlife populations were managed sustainably (determining hunting seasons, setting quotas, etc.), to one that also ensures wildlife provide ecological, social, cultural, recreational and economic benefits to all members of society. This movement is necessary; particularly given projected human population growth will result in significant urban and rural

development and promote interaction with wildlife, especially with those species capable of adapting and residing in near urban and sub-urban areas. Academic institutions have also responded and many now offer courses related to resolving human-wildlife conflicts to ensure students enrolled in wildlife management studies are prepared for post-graduate employment.

Viable solutions to current issues will not come easy. Living with wildlife will continue to be challenging, particularly in population dense areas, such as southern Ontario where the majority of the provincial population resides and where significant human population increases are projected. Ontarians will need to reflect on their own roles and responsibilities, work together, define leadership, develop community based approaches and increase public awareness and understanding about wildlife behaviour and the diversity of public interests and values placed on wildlife.

I believe one of the most difficult tasks for preventing and minimizing human-wildlife conflicts will be reaching consensus on community based approaches which reflect a wide range of public values. Each of us will need to recognize the role and responsibility we have in endorsing solutions for preventing and managing conflicts and living with wildlife. Clearly, “*Wildlife Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*” will be as much about understanding the range of public values placed on wildlife while managing human expectations as it will be about ensuring conservation and sustainability of wildlife resources.

*Michael Gatt is a Senior Wildlife Biologist with Regional Operations Division, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. He graduated from Fleming College, Lindsay, with a Fish and Wildlife Technologist Diploma in 1989 and from the University of Guelph with a Master's of Science Degree in Conservation Biology and Genetics in 1998.*

## Membership

If you haven't sent back your membership, please do so as soon as possible. You may find a reminder with your newsletter to tweak your memory.

# Ontario Highbush Blueberry Growers Annual Meeting 2012

**Saturday Mar. 31 2012**

## **EZ GROW FARMS**

**Darryl, Helen, Dusty Zamecnik  
1771 CR23 Frogmore ON**

10:00 **Welcome** - Darryl Zamecnik

10:15 **Treasurers Report**–  
Steve Kustermans

10:25 **OF&VGA Report**  
Norm Charbonneau

10:35 **Canadian Hort Council Report**  
Bill Parks

10:45 **Minor Use Report – weeds,  
disease, insects and blueberry  
nutrition**  
Charles Stevens

11:00 **Farm Tour**

NOON Lunch

1:00 **Spotted Wing Drosophila Survey  
& Control for 2012**  
Pam Fisher

1:15 **Crop Protection** - Registrations to  
Dec 2011. Emergency Crop  
Protection Registrations New Crop  
Protection Work  
Denise Beaton, OMAFRA

1:30 **Crop Protection Trials for 2012**  
Dr. Al Hamil

1:45 **Crop Protection Trials for 2011 –  
2012**  
Darren Robinson, UofG, Ridgetown

2:00 **Report from Michigan:  
Pollination, Frost protection,  
Disease Control, Pest  
Management**  
Mark Longstroth,  
Michigan State University

## **Elections**

President: Darryl Zamecnik  
Secretary: Bill Parks

Treasurer: Steve Kustermans  
Directors: Bill Burton, Del Murray, Bert  
Andrews, Norm Charbonneau, Charles  
Stevens

3:00 **Adjourn**

OHBGA MEMBERSHIPS  
\$200 per farm ( \$176.99 + HST \$23.01 )  
Meeting Registration \$20 before Mar. 15.  
\$30 after Mar.15 2012  
Please reply to Bill Parks  
Bill@parksblueberries.com  
tel 519-359-3000

## Savvy Farmer offers free version of popular software

Guelph-based The Savvy Farmer Inc.  
announced the launch of [Savvy Farmer lite](#),  
a free version of its popular Savvy Farmer  
software.

The "lite" version allows growers and other  
pest control professionals fast access to  
pest control information including:

- listings of all products that control  
any weed, insect, disease, or  
nuisance animal problem in over  
750 crops including field crops, fruits  
and vegetables
- product rates of application
- all product labels, including co-  
packs and newly registered  
products
- identification photos of over 1,000  
pests, including weeds, insects, and  
diseases

This new service "was created in response  
to farmers who want quick and easy access  
to pest control information but do not feel  
they need the added features found within  
the full Savvy Farmer paid software," Savvy  
Farmer president Warren Libby said in a  
release.

"While Savvy Farmer lite contains fewer  
features than the Advanced version, we  
believe many farmers will find it an  
extremely convenient tool that they will refer

to often. Since there is no subscription required, users can bookmark the site on their computer or tablet and use it as often as they want, free of charge."

The free service operates as a cloud-based application; therefore its data can be updated every day. "It's a rare day that there isn't new information to add to Savvy Farmer... and we work hard to be the most complete and current source of pest control information in Canada," said Libby.

The company will continue to offer more "in-depth" information through its subscription-based Savvy Farmer Advanced and Savvy Farmer Pro services. These versions of Savvy Farmer offer deeper information on treatments including all tank-mixes, advanced tools to customize treatments, additional information, mobile access, and electronic record-keeping capability. First launched in 2011, Savvy Farmer is already trusted by farmers, agricultural retailers, custom applicators, agronomists, and government across Canada as the #1 source of unbiased pest control information.

Savvy Farmer lite can be accessed at [www.savvyfarmerlite.com](http://www.savvyfarmerlite.com) while information on all the Savvy Farmer software's can be found at [www.savvyfarmer.com](http://www.savvyfarmer.com)

## Register today on Ontariofresh.ca!

Create your free profile on **Ontariofresh.ca** before April 30<sup>th</sup> and not only can you grow your business and find new buyers, you could also win a luxury weekend for two at Langdon Hall Country House and Spa or a delicious gift basket of local Ontario goodies. **Ontariofresh.ca** is a great new tool to help connect the local food value chain in Ontario. If you grow, pack, process, or sell Ontario food, this website can help you connect with new buyers from chefs or caterers to major institutions.

**Ontariofresh.ca** will put key information about your business in front of buyers and distributors who are looking to source local. In just a few minutes you can create an eye-catching profile that lets people know what you have to offer: include photos, logos,

and information about what you sell to help people find you quickly. Once you register you can also use functions like the Marketplace as well as the powerful search and in-site messaging to find potential partners and reach out to people you want to do business with.

**Ontariofresh.ca**  
*Growing the Business of Local Food*



Visit **Ontariofresh.ca** for more information and to create your profile today! If you have any questions email [info@ontariofresh.ca](mailto:info@ontariofresh.ca) or call (416) 960-0001 x.310.

## Pam Fisher Wins Bravo Award

Most OBGA members have gotten to know Pam Fisher who we call our very own berry specialist. Those that know Pam well are familiar with her work ethic and her willingness to help berry growers across the province and throughout North America. The BRAVO award is an internal award given to public servants. Recipients are nominated by their peers. Below you will see what Pam's colleagues think of the job that she does. We have known this for a long time as Pam was honored by the OBGA more than 5 years ago for her dedication to the berry industry.

Pam Fisher was the recipient of a BRAVO Award for customer service. Bonnie Winchester presented the award to Pam and said the following:

- As our Berry Crops Specialist, Pam is known for her encyclopedic knowledge, her insight and professionalism.
- She is admired for her ability to work collaboratively with everyone -- from producers to researchers to colleagues.
- Her circle of influence reaches across the province, the nation and the world.
- Pam is known as a hard worker with an insatiable curiosity for new and

- emerging trends in berry production.
- She is generous with her time. Here's a short list of what she is involved in:
    - initiating new products and programs based on needs identified by producers
    - conducting on-farm research
    - presenting at and attending countless conferences and workshops
    - editing and producing technically excellent publications and, during the growing season, the weekly Berry Bulletin.
    - providing advice and support to her colleagues at OMAFRA and in the horticultural industry.
  - Obviously, Pam has a strong work ethic. Her attitude is summed up by her nominators as: "always positive, eager and ready to tackle new challenges."
  - Pam, we are very proud to have you on our team...Congratulations.

## Research

### **Tunnel-growing Systems for raspberries**

*Adam Dale, Becky Hughes, and John Zandstra, and Elliott Currie, University of Guelph, Ontario.*

1. Investigate cultural aspects of sustainable tunnel and other protected cultivation systems in Canada.

In the first experiment, three environments are being compared: high tunnels, Voen rain shelters and outside. Three fall-bearing raspberry cultivars, Autumn Britten, Joan J and Polka were planted outside and in the high tunnels in Cedar Springs and New Liskeard, Ontario in 2010. One half of the plots outside will be covered with Voen rain shelters in 2012. The trial was picked in 2011 with only two treatments – high tunnel and outside. Plants in the high tunnels at both sites yielded more fruit than those outside, and they had a longer fruiting season.

In the second experiment the same three environmental treatments above are being compared for two summer-bearing raspberries. This trial was planted at Cedar Springs and New Liskeard, Ontario in 2011 with two summer-bearing cultivars, Nova and Prelude.

2. Develop and test new cultivars adapted for high tunnel systems

Crosses were made in the late fall –winter 2010/11. These included the primocane-fruiting cultivars, Autumn Britten, and Polka, the florican cultivars Canby, Tulameen and Glen Ample, three florican winter-hardy selections from British Columbia and three from Ontario, and five primocane-fruiting selections from Ontario.

Seed was germinated during the spring and summer and about 450 seedlings produced. Since crossing and germination was delayed, the plants are still only 10cm tall.

They are being cold-stored over the winter, and will be planted in tunnels at Strawberry Tyme Farms, Simcoe, in the spring.

One of the traits we were hoping to incorporate the germplasm was the recessive spine-free characteristic. Our information indicated that only Glen Ample was spine-free and two of the Ontario selections were heterozygous. When the seedlings were germinated we found that families from five of the Ontario seedlings were spine-free. When the pedigrees were checked, we found that Qualicum is heterozygous for the trait.

The crosses will be repeated and steps are being taken to make the crosses earlier so that 2000 seedlings can be planted in the screenhouse in spring 2012. Also we are sourcing for plants of Pathfinder, the primocane –fruiting cultivar used in Quebec and Honeyqueen, a yellow primocane – fruiting cultivar used in Saskatchewan.

3. Conduct economic studies to quantify the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of growing raspberries in high tunnels and umbrella protected cultivation systems.

Data from the Report by D. Yan and C. Du in 2003 entitled 'Economic Feasibility Analysis of Raspberries under Protective Structures in Ontario' is being updated. This report indicated that tunnels could provide an Internal Rate of Return of 35%.

## Berry Hats from Nepal

A Canada-based volunteer for non-profit NGO, Mountain Village Development Board, is working to alleviate poverty in the mountainous and hilly regions of Bajhang District, far west Nepal. A business has been established to import quality goods from Nepal made from local wool, hemp, cotton, and silk, in an effort to contribute to the economic development potential of Nepal and its people.

One of the products we hand-make in Nepal are berry hats, ideal for a marketing. The hats are currently being made from 100% wool with a soft fleece-lining, and can also be produced using cotton. Ear flaps can be added, and also a front brim to block summer sunshine! An embroidered message and/or logo can be added to the hat. Cost of the hat depends on materials used, embroidery, and quantity ordered.



The OBGA is not going to bulk order any of these but if you are interested in supporting this initiative contact

Louise Lupo  
 Mana Kawala Import/Export  
[519-373-7084](tel:519-373-7084)  
[manakawala@gmail.com](mailto:manakawala@gmail.com)

## OBGA Promotional Items

The OBGA will be stocking many of the items we have over the past few years.

Pictures of OBGA promotional materials can be found in the Grower Member section of the website or at:

<http://ontarioberries.com/media/documents/pdf/promotional-items-pictures-2011.pdf>

Prices for the items are below. The reusable strawberry bags have gone up slightly if you want them without a logo. There is an opportunity to get the OBGA logo or your logo applied to these bags at a cost of \$1.50 per bag with a minimum order of 100.

Item	2012 Cost to Grower
Biodegradable Bags	\$26.00-\$28.00/1000
VHQ Brochures Strawberry, Raspberry and Blueberry	TBD
Strawberry Shaped Bags	\$1.50 with logo \$1.15 no logo
Recipe Pads	\$1.00/pad of 50
Placemats	\$5.00/100
Post Signs	\$10.00
Digital Ready Poster	No Charge

There was a good discussion about the poster ready artwork that would be available to members at the conference. The recommendation is to have a high quality picture 4MB or larger if you want a larger poster. It was suggested that you consider staging a photo. Once received at the OBGA office we should be able to get you the poster back within 24-48 hours. We will be sending out reminders via email over the next few months. We hope to get an order form up online very soon. Any questions feel free to call.

The OBGA will continue with other promotional activities such as the Foodland Ontario In Store Display Contest, Google and Facebook Advertising as well as print advertising and continued upgrades to the new website!