

Summary: “Organic production of raspberries and blackberries in tunnels, 2008-2011”

Funded by the Swedish Board of Agriculture

The aim of the project was to demonstrate the opportunities for sustainable production of organic raspberries and blackberries of high quality during an extended season in Sweden. The field experiments conducted at SLU, Råanna Experimental Station in Skövde, showed that there are cultivars of floricane and primo cane raspberries that are well suited to organic production. Growing in high plastic tunnels with a careful planning of cultivars and a combination of floricane and primo-cane raspberries, gives a possibility to produce fresh, tasty and popular organic raspberries during a prolonged season from mid June to mid-October. Primo cane raspberries gave a full crop the year after planting, while floricane raspberries and blackberries need another year to develop fruit-bearing shoots. For blackberry the production is entirely possible, but the cultivation system requires further development. The market for blackberries is unpredictable and need to be investigated.

Cultivation in high plastic tunnels is a prerequisite for a successful organic production of raspberries and blackberries. The higher temperature and a drier climate, provides reliable and high yield with good fruit quality. Tunnel production also provides the opportunity for biological control of pests such as mites and insects. The results of the project carried out shows that the floricane cultivar Glen Ample can be recommended for organic production as it is quite hardy in southern Sweden (zone 3-4) and produce high yield of nice tasty fruits. Among primo cane raspberries the cultivar Polka can be recommended as it provides high yield and fruits with good shelf life and taste. A comparison of cultivation in soil and in pots shows that soil cultivation is safer and provides significantly higher returns when growing organically. An evaluation of two levels of added organic nitrogen shows that the floricane raspberries need 12-17 grams of nitrogen per plant and season, while primo canes need only 9-12 grams.

Birgitta Svensson

Department of Horticulture

