

Haskap Research Opportunities

By Dr. Bob Bors
University of Saskatchewan
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With a population of 124 million and a rapidly aging population, Saskatchewan is in prime position to produce and export Haskap to Japan. Haskap, known in Canada as blue honeysuckle, is native to the Northern regions of Japan and has been promoted for many years as a health food and as a 'secret to longevity'. In the last decade 90% of Japan's Haskap acreage has been lost to urban sprawl, yet there exist many processing companies in Japan who are competing for the crop. In North America, the U of S has the largest collection of Russian Blue Honeysuckle Cultivars and has several thousand seedlings of Japanese Haskap. We are the only institute in Canada working on this crop! In addition to explaining the Japanese Market and showing pictures of their many products, a review of the U of S research will be given. Haskap has many exciting attributes that should make this a popular crop with growers. It can take -7°C to open flowers without damage. It is extremely hardy (Zone 0 hardiness). It can withstand wet soil and may be suitable where other crops cannot be grown. It often produces fruit the season following its planting. The fruit ripens in June, weeks before strawberries and Saskatoons. Perhaps most important of all is its uniform ripening and potential for mechanical harvesting. Taste tests reveal a high acceptance rate amongst Canadians for the processed product. Most people feel it is most like a blueberry which is one of the fruit industry's most popular flavours.

