



News from Northern New York Agricultural Development Program

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New Super Fruit for Northern New York? Willsboro Research Farm Establishing Juneberry Nursery

Northern NY - Northern New York is getting on the Juneberry super fruit bandwagon. With funding from the farmer-led Northern New York Agricultural Development Program, one of the largest Juneberry research nurseries will be established at the Cornell Willsboro Research Farm in Willsboro, NY.

Juneberry, scientifically known as amelanchier, pronounced ama-lan-cheer, is a blueberry-like fruit noted for its antioxidant and nutritional value. The fruit is rich in iron, calcium, manganese, protein and fiber.

Cornell Willsboro Research Farm Manager Michael Davis is excited to see how well juneberries will grow in the Northern New York climate and is participating in a multi-state project evaluating opportunities for the Northeastern U.S. production of the berries.

“Juneberry is grown in the western US and Canada as saskatoon berry. In the Eastern U.S. and Canada, it grows in the coastal states stretching from Virginia north to Maine and in Nova Scotia,” Davis says.

“The multi-state project team is collecting wild cuttings and seeds in multiple states and Canada for a genomic database and the development of lines suitable for production in the Northeast,” Davis says.

The plants flower from March into May and produce fruit in June and July. It reproduces by self-fertilization.

While the plants prefer sandy coastal habitats, it has also been known to grow in New York in woodland and forest openings; pine barrens; dry, open areas; and pond margins.

Juneberry is a New York State endangered species with populations on Long Island and Staten Island.

The crop is part of North American history as native peoples often incorporated juneberries into pemmican, a high-energy mix of available meat and fruits. The name *Amelanchier Nantucketensis* derives from description by botanist Eugene Bicknell of plants growing on Nantucket Island in Massachusetts in 1911.

“As a June-July harvest crop, Juneberry would produce revenues early in the growing season for producers. Juneberry could prove to be a super fruit not only nutritionally, but economically for Northern New York growers,” Davis says.

The first commercial-scale crop is expected at the Willsboro farm in 2015.

The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program provides practical, on-farm research, technical assistance, and outreach on a diverse range of crops to farmers in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. Learn more about agriculture in Northern New York and find NNYADP project results at www.nnyagdev.org. -30-