

March 2014

# garden time

A Digital Monthly Magazine for Your Garden & Home

## Tulipfest

A Bloom with a View

**Urban Apples**

**Ferns**

OSU Berry Crop Specialist  
**Bernadine Strik**

# The Specialist

OSU teacher/researcher Dr. Bernadine Strik has been berry berry good to Northwest farmers.

by Judy Alleruzzo



Bernadine Strik at the NWREC Open House

PHOTO CREDIT: K. JACOBSEN

Berry Crop Specialist----This job title brings to mind a person whose job it is to know ALL about Blueberries, Raspberries, Blackberries, Strawberries, Cranberries and Hardy Kiwi. Whew! Doesn't that sound like an intense career?

Our Hortie of the month; Dr. Bernadine C. Strik, who has been a member of the Department of Horticulture at Oregon State University for over 25 years. She is currently a Professor for the Department and The Berry Crop Specialist. She completes research on all these fruit varieties plus teaches at OSU and the Master Gardener program and consults with farmers and researchers in the NW and all over the world!

She is a busy person.

Oregon is lucky to have her teach-

ing and researching at OSU and she loves being in Oregon. She told me "the Willamette Valley has the ideal climate for growing berries with warm days and cool nights leading to great yields and quality."

Dr. Strik spent her early years in The Netherlands. She and her family then moved to Australia and by her late teens, they moved to Vancouver Island, Canada, where they owned a retail nursery. She attended the University



of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, where she graduated with a B.S. in Botany.

For her advanced degree, Dr Strik attended the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada where her PhD work was in Strawberry Physiology. (Physiology is the study of the fundamental function of the plant, yield, and quality etc of the fruit) She came back west to work at OSU where she is so involved in education and research. She is also the Berry Crop Leader at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center (NWREC), the OSU Research Station in Aurora, Oregon.

She doesn't play favorites and works on research projects on all berry crops. She states, "The best ideas come from growers. I love to work with them." Her many research projects have focused on improving yield and fruit quality, machine harvest efficiency, alternative production, plant nutrition, cold hardiness and organic production systems. Several years ago she and her colleagues worked on improving Blueberry production by decreasing plant spacing and using a trellis system for the plants. The research of a trellis system showed "reduced machine harvest losses of 3-8% of total yield per year in mature plants." The plant density research trialed plants spaced 1.5 to 3ft apart verses the standard 4ft spacing. This reduced spacing increased productivity by 5 tons per acre.

Funding for her research comes from many sources including, Berry Crop Commission Funds, Direct Industry and Federal Funding sources.

Dr Strik has published over 100 scientific papers and has written at least 12 book chapters. Over 50 of her OSU Extension Publications can be accessed through the OSU website, <http://extension.oregon-state.edu/gardening>

We, at Garden Time use this website as research based gardening

information is the best.

She does love all aspects of teaching, from her students at OSU to all of us gardeners. She has written 8 Home Garden Berry Crop publications and usually teaches several Master Gardener classes each year.

Dr. Strik is also involved in many professional groups, including being a member of The Executive Board of the International Society for Horticulture Science.

Over her career, she has received many awards including Outstanding Leader in the Blueberry Industry presented by the Oregon Growers Association.

But, with all these responsibilities and accolades, Bernadine Strik is a practical gardener and farmer at heart. She and husband Neil Bell, take the time from their busy schedules to garden at their home. As Neil told us last March when he was featured as GT's Hortie of the Month, their daughters are getting into the cooking of the produce from the garden. Maybe this is the year they will be into the growing of the berries and vegetables.

In the world of commercial berries, growers are usually the first

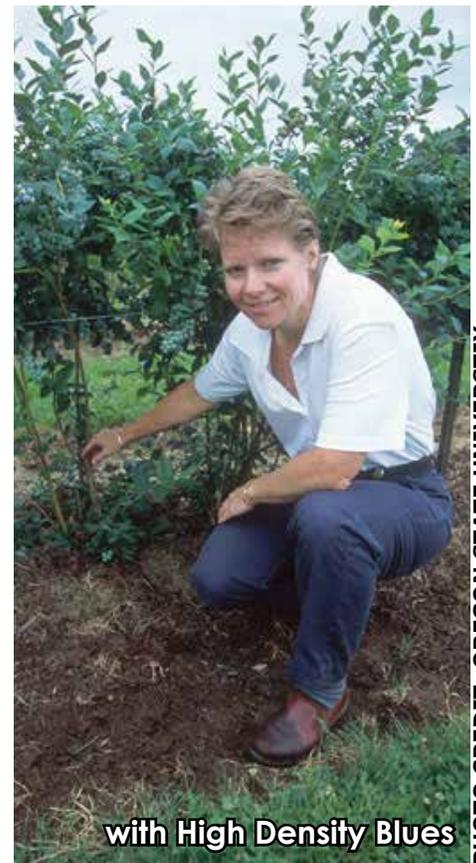


PHOTO CREDIT: OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

with High Density Blues

to get all the new fruit variety plants. Then, a few years later, these new varieties are available to the home gardener. I asked Dr. Strik to name a few of her new favorites that are available now or very soon for the home gardener. She was quick to say she is not a breeder but helps get the varieties to market. She works with



Bernadine, Neil, Shannon and Nicole



with BCS Organic Blues



many people including Dr Chad Finn, OSU and Berry Crop Breeder USDA/ARS at NWREC to bring new fruit to market.

Check with your favorite garden center for availability of these varieties.

**Blackberry 'Black Diamond'** - Tasty fruit, Thornless canes with a bit larger and firmer fruit than Marion Berries.

**Blackberry 'Columbia Star'** - Easy to pick, large good flavor fruit, thornless canes.

**Blackberry 'Obsidian'** - Good flavor but canes have thorns.

**Strawberry 'Sweet Bliss'** - June Bearing (Short day), large fruit, sweet, full Strawberry flavor.

**Strawberry 'Sweet Sunrise'** - Mid Season bearing, Medium to Large fruit with deep red internal color, full, balanced sweet to acid flavored fruit.

**Strawberry 'Tillamook'** - Tip for this variety is to leave berries on plants to ripen. It has very large fruit.

**Red Raspberry 'Vintage'** - Late season bright red, sweet berries, 30-35% larger berries than 'Heritage' Red Raspberry.

New Blueberry variety coming soon! Stay tuned....

Every summer at NWREC in Aurora, there are berry-tasting events called Field Days. Keep watch on Garden Time's Event Calendar for the dates.

Strawberry Field Day is in early June and Blueberry/Caneberry Field Day is in early July.

After talking to and reading about Dr Strik, I realized how lucky we really are to have her working at OSU. She is passionate about helping farmers grow better fruit, get more for their crops, be bet-

ter stewards of the land and get more tasty fruit to the commercial markets. She wants her research to make a difference for all of us.

So next time you are enjoying delicious Oregon berries, remember all the hard work, Dr Bernadine Strik and her colleagues are doing to help make those berries be such a tasty treat!

Sources

<http://hortsci.ashspublications.org/content/46/12/1701.full>

<http://oregonstate.technology-publisher.com/technology/12381>



MG grape pruning workshop in Marion County