



**Northwest Center**  
FOR SMALL FRUITS RESEARCH

2025 - 2026

# Research Priorities

Updated Annually at the NCSFR Conference

## **OVERVIEW**

Each year, we update the things we think are most important to research. This helps researchers know what the industry needs and how those needs change each year.

## Black Raspberries Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18, 2025

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Breed cultivars that are high-yielding, winter hardy, heat resilient, machine harvestable, disease resistant and high brix
B)	Adaptation to heat stress and cold stress with regards to water management
C)	Control of fungal diseases (Verticillium, root rot, cane blight, and Botrytis)
D)	New methods and technology for improving on-farm labor efficiency, yield and quality
E)	Virus management
2A)	Control/management of most challenging perennial weeds
B)	Health benefit research
C)	Water management
D)	Interactions of soilborne pathogens
E)	Evaluate new insect management tools and strategies, including emerging pests

## Blackberry Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18, 2025

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Breed cultivars that are thornless, high-yielding, winter hardy, heat-resilient, machine harvestable, disease resistant, and have superior fruit quality and flavor
B)	Adaptation to heat stress and cold stress
C)	New methods and technology for improving on-farm labor efficiency, yield and quality
D)	Conventional and organic controls of fungal diseases ( Rust, Blackberry Collapse, cane blight & Botrytis)
E)	Evaluate new insecticides/management strategies (conventional and organic) for insect pests, including Spotted Wing Drosophila
2A)	Development of micronutrient sufficiency-management programs
B)	Biology and management of emerging pests
C)	Control/management of most challenging perennial weeds
D)	Interactions of soilborne pathogens
E)	Primocane management
3A)	Freeze damage prevention in caneberries
B)	Health benefit research
C)	Water management
D)	Improve viability of organic and conventional fresh market production
E)	Virus management

## Blueberry Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18, 2025

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Research to reduce labor costs (e.g. mechanical harvester, pruner, weed mat, genetics, fruit bruising, etc.)
B)	Biology and Management of diseases, especially viruses and their vectors, <i>Botrytis</i> , mummyberry, aerial gall, bacterial blight resistance
C)	Management of Spotted Wing Drosophila
D)	Organic production systems
E)	Pollination, fruit set, and bud set, including biotic and abiotic factors as well as new technologies
2A)	Improve or extend fresh market, controlled atmosphere packaging, physical covers or chemicals, post-harvest handling and cultural inputs
B)	Fertility and Biostimulant management
C)	Plant breeding/variety evaluation
D)	Weed management, including herbicide resistance
E)	Management/irrigation/chemigation, cooling, fertigation, water delivery, frost and heat protection, and the impact on fruit quality
3A)	Biology and management of arthropod pests while conserving natural enemy populations
B)	Grafting rootstocks
C)	Vertebrate management
D)	Food safety
E)	Research on nematodes, including development of economic thresholds and development of in-season control for nematodes

## Cranberry Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18, 2025

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	New herbicides for control of priority perennial weeds
B)	New insecticides that are effective using chemigation and alternative application methods (e.g., drones)
C)	Fungicides for fruit and foliar disease management
D)	Market expansion through nutraceuticals/health or sustainable practices
E)	Irrigation system to optimize frost protection and pesticide applications
2A)	Pollination, fruit set and pollinator health
B)	Organic production systems, including pest control, nutrient management, soil health, weed control, and fresh fruit production
C)	Soil borne pest control (cranberry girdler and root weevil)
D)	Production systems for new planting and renovations, including new varieties and nutrient management
E)	Evaluate wireless frost alert and soil moisture units for use on cranberry farms
3A)	Vertebrate pest management
B)	Sanding systems and alternatives for new and established plantings

## New Speciality Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18, 2025

**Haskap/Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sp.*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Five-Flavor Fruit (*Schisandra chinensis*), Gooseberry (*Ribes sp.*), Currants (*Ribes sp.*), Hardy Kiwifruit (*Actinidia sp.*), Lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), Huckleberry (*Vaccinium sp.*), Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), Elderberry (*Sambucus sp.*), Sea Buckthorn Berry (*Hippophae sp.*), Buffalo Berry (*Shepherdia sp.*), Goji Berry (*Lycium barbarum*)**

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Pest management (e.g., sawfly on gooseberry) including available tools (Pesticide tracking, registration and re-registration issues for new up-and-coming crops)
B)	Cultivar Development: Germplasm collection for superior and/or rare genotypes (including bilberry ( <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> ), huckleberry ( <i>Vaccinium membranaceum</i> ), etc.) , cultivar verification, yield/quality improvement, resistance and nutraceutical traits, adaptation for Pacific Northwest environment, and introduction.
C)	Develop and/or improve production systems (how do we grow these crops?), frost protection
D)	Disease management of new specialty crops, eg: Phytophthora in Hardy Kiwifruit
E)	General postharvest handling and long-term storage
2A)	New product development, food processing issues, health claims-based marketing including nutraceuticals
B)	Evaluate the invasive potential of specialty crops i.e., Haskap
C)	Improving fruit quality in new specialty crops through management practices
D)	Pollination/fruit set
E)	Foliar diseases in Ribes (ex. White Pine Blister Rust)
3A)	Investigation of mycorrhizal associations in Huckleberry
B)	Currant fruit fly (also called gooseberry maggot)
C)	Nutrition of new specialty crops (fertilization)
D)	SWD management in Elderberry
E)	Harvesting and sorting efficiency for Elderberry
F)	Systemic Pathogen Tolerance, especially to Viruses.

## Red Raspberry Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18, 2025

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Develop cultivars that are summer-bearing, high-yielding, winter hardy, machine harvestable, disease resistant, virus resistant, and have superior fresh and processed fruit quality
B)	Management options for control of Spotted Wing Drosophila (including targeting systemic action on larvae)
C)	Mite management- New tools and MRLs, shorter pre-harvest intervals
D)	Labor saving practices – pruning efficiency, public/private technology partnerships, and harvester automation
E)	Foliar and cane diseases – ex. Spur blight, yellow rust, cane blight, powdery mildew, cane botrytis, etc.
2A)	Fruit rot, including pre-harvest, post-harvest, and for shelf life
B)	Cane management, including suppression, alternatives to paraquat
C)	Weed management focusing on horsetail, poison hemlock, wild buckwheat, nightshade, Canada thistle, watergrass
D)	Cutworm, leafroller management
E)	Soil fumigation techniques and alternatives to control soil pathogens, nematodes (dagger), and weeds
3A)	Maximum residue limits (MRLs) – residue decline curves, harmonization
B)	Nutrient management – revise OSU specs, consider timing, varieties, application techniques, calcium, nutrient balance
C)	Thrips life cycle and control strategies
D)	Viruses/crumbly fruit, pollination
E)	Understanding soil ecology (including biology, nutrient balance) and soil-borne pathogens and their effects on plant health and crop yields
F)	Alternative Management Systems to reduce cost of production: Fruit yield per lineal foot of bed, planting densities, row spacing and trellising
G)	Pest management as it affects pollinators



H)	Irrigation management-application techniques including pulsing
I)	Management options for control of Brown Marmorated Stink Bug
J)	Effects of Fungicide and fertility programs on brix
K)	Season extension- improving viability of fresh market production
L)	Root Weevils
M)	Snail life cycle and management strategies

## Strawberry Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18, 2025

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Develop and evaluate cultivars with processed and fresh market potential, including earlier and later ripening
B)	Drip irrigation in matted-row production systems
C)	Pre and post harvest weed control, including new chemistry to reduce resistance
D)	The use of plastic culture in strawberry production in Day Neutral and June bearing strawberry crops
E)	Biology and management of botrytis
2A)	Biology and management of powdery mildew
B)	Soil Fertility and fertigation
C)	Alternate production systems for economic efficiency, increased yield and cultivar management, including reducing harvest costs for conventional and organic production
D)	Greenhouse substrate production, including nutrient and disease management
E)	Management of Day Neutral July production lull
3A)	Mite management
B)	Post-harvest management of fruit
C)	Vertebrate pest management
D)	Management of root weevil
E)	Management of Spotted Wing Drosophila
F)	Cultural management practices to improve soil health

## Table Grape Viticulture Research Priorities

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Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Evaluation of varieties to increase berry and cluster quality.
B)	Study canopy design to maximize berry quality and yield at harvest and after storage.
C)	Study of impact of varieties and canopy design on fruit set and yield components.
D)	Nutritional management for different varieties and canopies.
E)	Variety and canopy effects on water management.
2A)	Photosynthesis and carbon positioning under different canopy systems and varieties.
B)	Disease resistance in different vine architectural systems, e.g., powdery mildew and botrytis.
C)	Density of canopy affecting insect populations.
D)	Comparison of flavor components in different regions.
E)	Studying culture of galls in table grapes.
3A)	Develop web tools for sustainable site development.
B)	Evaluation of rootstock on cultivar vigor, nutrition status, yield, and quality
C)	Effect of nematodes on vine growth.

## Wine & Juice Grape Viticulture Research Priorities

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Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Water, nutrient, and soil health management to optimize grape production and wine quality.
B)	Incidence, impact, vectors and management of leaf roll and red blotch.
C)	Mitigation strategies for environmental stress (e.g. cold, heat/sun burn, smoke, and drought stress) as it pertains to grape, juice, and wine production.
D)	Biology and management of botrytis and powdery mildew.
E)	Development and evaluation of precision mechanization tools, and technology that reduce reliance on hand labor within the vineyard and processing facilities (e.g. canopy management, weed and pest management, crop management, sorting, MOG removal).
2A)	Evaluation of cultivar and rootstock suitability for PNW production.
B)	Development and evaluation of organic, sustainable, regenerative farming systems.
C)	Biology and management of vineyard weeds.
D)	Biology and management of new or invasive pests (e.g. insects, nematodes).
E)	Biology and management of trunk diseases/disease complexes.
3A)	Grapevine physiology related to yield, ripening, and quality.
B)	Vineyard redevelopment for a weather extremes/consumer preferences

## Wine Processing Research Priorities

Revised Nov. 18 2025

Numbered priorities are listed from most important to least important. Within each numbered priority, **all lettered priorities hold the same weight (i.e. A-E).**

1A)	Incidence and measurement of wine components and their individual and combined impact on color, flavor, aroma and texture.
B)	Develop winemaking protocols to mitigate impact of environmental risk on wine quality (e.g. smoke, feedlot, hemp, extreme temperatures, and insects).
C)	Move into Preventing sulfide and reduction compounds, minimizing stuck and sluggish fermentations including nutrient management.
D)	Impact, identification and application of native, novel yeast and bacteria (e.g. ML) for fermentation management
E)	Incidence and control of <i>Brettanomyces</i> , <i>Pediococcus</i> , and <i>Lactobacillus</i> and other spoilage microbes.
2A)	Managing fruit from virus affected vines in the winery.
B)	Winery mechanization and automation technologies for large- and small-scale operations.
C)	Understand and mitigate the effect of bunch rots on wine quality.
D)	Develop and evaluate organic and sustainable winemaking practices, e.g. wine processing, winery management, alternatives to sulfites, and utilization of value added by-products.
E)	Winemaking techniques, (e.g. pre-fermentation handling, cold soak, extended maceration, optical sorting, reducing alcohol).
3A)	Alternative methods to achieve temperature stability and wine stabilization.
B)	Impact of alcohol on wine (e.g. flavor, sensory, alcohol reduction, low alcohol, etc.).