

Project: The effect of chill hour accumulation on the growth and yield of northern strawberry varieties

Overview:

Three northern strawberry varieties were dug at three different levels of accumulated chill hour (base 8°C at 4') in the fall of 2015. The bare root plants were planted in the spring of 2016 and will be monitored for the 2016/2017 growing season for plant vigor, with the final measurement being taken for yield in summer 2017.

Why this is important:

There are a number of factors that can affect the growth potential of northern strawberry nursery plants, including but not limited to the number of chill hours they accumulate prior to late fall digging. Chill hours affect the dormancy of plants. To ensure good storage, a minimum of 600 chill hours are required, as shown in previous studies. In the past, producers have started digging around November 11th but with climate change the certainty that the appropriate number of chill hours are accumulated at this time is unknown. It is the objective of this research that we will again verify that 600 chill hours is the ideal number for digging northern nursery stock and to show the date when Nova Scotia reaches that ideal number. This will benefit northern strawberry producers by ensuring that the plants are in the best health possible when they are planted.

Project length:

Two years. It was initiated in fall 2015 with digging, then bare-root strawberry nursery plants were planted in spring 2016 and harvest will take place in the summer of 2017.

Project co-operators:

C.O. Keddy Nursery and Webster Farms Ltd. with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture as the funding partner.