

Aronia Update – 2007-2010

The aronia plants at CREC were obtained from mail-order nurseries in deep, 1-quart, pots. The plants established nicely, but ideally, a large planting would be started from small plugs or bareroot plants so that the plant's roots would make their own 'home' and also to realize a great cost and labor savings over the larger plants.



Aronia care is minimal. At planting, compost was added to the hole and the plants were watered regularly thereafter. Weeds and grass were removed with glyphosate applications prior to planting and wood chips were later applied to the entire row, about 2- to 3-inches thick. Fertilization is the same as for the other plants.

The plants we initially received were larger and leafed out. No pruning was done until spring 2009 when crossing branches were removed and the plants were pruned for increased air movement; this was repeated in 2010. In addition, several plants were still directing their growth into a small number of shoots; these were pruned back to encourage other buds to break dormancy and make a more full plant. *It would have been to our advantage to prune the dormant plants in spring 2008 to encourage growth and fruiting potential a year sooner.* In 2010, we received dormant 'McKenzie' plants to add to the demonstration. These were pruned to several buds per shoot before planting and developed a nice crown of short shoots.

Pests to date have been:

- Mice: In winter 2007-08, mice ate two 'Raintree Select' plants to the ground. They regrew quickly. In spring 2009, mice fed again, but damage was less extensive.
- Pear Sawfly: A heavy infestation of pear sawfly larvae skeletonized the surfaces of the leaves of all varieties in mid-August 2010. This has the potential to reduce flowering in 2011. Control is not usually recommended as most damage is cosmetic. Caterpillar-control methods are useless as these are fly larvae. An organic pest control, spinosad, may work, but it is very toxic to bees.



Fall 2009 had ideal warm, dry conditions during the final ripening stages. Though the plants got an early start in spring 2010, cool, rainy weather in early September stopped the accumulation of sugars and caused some of the berries to start to split. We picked the fruit to avoid spoilage.

Name	Harvest Weight per 4 plants (kg)			Ave Wt of 10 berries (g)			Ave Brix		
	9-18	9-14	9-8	9-18	9-14	9-8	9-18	9-14	9-8
	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010
Nero	0.5	12.9	37.3	10.3	13	13.1	20.1	18.9	17.9
Viking	1.0	15.4	40.6	10.7	13.1	13.9	20.5	17.7	16.3
Raintree Select	0.2	7.6	29.8	12.4	14.6	13.7	19.6	19.6	18.0
Seedlings	0.9	12.2	40.3	11.5	14.4	12.8	20.2	18.6	16.0