

## High Tunnel Production of Organic Blackberries and Raspberries in Arkansas

Rom, C.R., Friedrich, H.,VMcAfee, J., Garcia, M.E., Johnson, D., & Popp, J.

*High tunnel production can enhance the sustainability of organic farming and local food systems by: 1) increasing farm profitability by extending the harvest of high value crops, out-of-season; 2) modifying environmental conditions and increasing fruit quality; and 3) reducing pest pressure and the need for pesticide application. In the southern US, the blackberry production season is limited to a few weeks, and raspberry production is limited by high temperatures. The objective for this project was to develop management practices using high tunnels and pruning techniques for out-of-season organic blackberry and raspberry production in high tunnels in the South.*

*The study consisted of three experiments: 1) advancing summer production of traditional florican blackberries and raspberries; 2) primocane, autumn-fruiting blackberries and raspberries; and 3) a double-cropping system of late-autumn and spring production of primocane blackberries and raspberries. For experiments two and three, organically grown primocane blackberries 'Prime Jim', 'Prime Jan and APF 46 and primocane raspberries 'Autumn Bliss,' 'Caroline,' and 'Dinkum' were compared in field and high tunnel production systems with harvests beginning in September and continuing until December. First year results of primocane-fruiting berries demonstrated an extended harvest season with a greater harvest and larger berries from plants grown in high tunnels. High tunnel results were more complex in year two.*