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For immediate release

Certain Raspberry Varieties High In Ellagic Acid

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Certain red and black raspberry cultivars appear to contain high levels of ellagic acid, an anticarcinogenic compound partly responsible for warding off diseases such as cancer.

According to an Ohio State University report, several red and black raspberry cultivars, evaluated for their ellagic acid content, contain the compound in varying amounts in the leaves of the plant, and the pulp and seeds of the fruit.

The research, conducted by OSU horticulturist Dick Funt and OSU food safety researchers, Steven Schwartz and Winston Bash, was meant to provide growers helpful information on marketing a product based on nutraceutical usefulness.

The researchers measured ellagic acid content of one black raspberry cultivar and four red raspberry cultivars over a three-year period to determine which cultivars contained the highest levels of ellagic acid in the leaves, seeds and pulp.

Ohio cultivars studied included ‘Jewel’, a black raspberry variety, and ‘Caroline’, ‘Autumn Bliss’, ‘Heritage’, and ‘Ruby’, fall bearing red raspberry varieties.

Overall, ellagic acid content was found in the highest amounts in the leaves of all the varieties studied, intermediate in seeds and lowest in pulp. And the seeds from ripe fruit had higher levels of ellagic acid than the pulp. The seeds of the black raspberry cultivar, ‘Jewel’, were 12 to 15 times higher in ellagic acid content than in the pulp and the seeds from ripe fruit where 40 percent higher in ellagic acid content than the seeds from unripe fruit. ‘Jewel’ is a popular black raspberry cultivar for Ohio growers due to its adequate fruit size and high yields.

In the red raspberry varieties, ‘Caroline’, a new cultivar not widely grown in Ohio, had higher levels of ellagic acid in its pulp and seeds than ‘Heritage’, the most popular cultivar for state growers. ‘Autumn Bliss’ and ‘Ruby’ had lower ellagic acid levels than ‘Heritage’.

This research and research in Maryland indicate that ellagic acid in red and black raspberries does not vary from different soils or different growing locations where it has been tested. It does appear that ellagic acid content does vary from year to year but the reasons for

variation is not known. Further research into the ellagic acid content of the leaves may prove beneficial in reducing insect damage and reduced pesticide usage.