

# Overview: 12<sup>th</sup> International Vaccinium Symposium

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The International Society for Horticultural Sciences 12<sup>th</sup> International Vaccinium Symposium was held virtually from the 30 August to 1 September 2021.

The Symposium was originally scheduled to be held in September 2020, in Nova Scotia, Canada but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rather than reschedule again, the Symposium was held as a completely online event, including virtual presentations, poster sessions, trade show, and field tour (Figure 1).

The sessions and events were accessed via a virtual lobby where anyone who registered could log into the session live and ask questions of the presenters. Registration also included access to recordings of all sessions and tours for 12 months so that participants could listen to all presentations at leisure.

There were many technical sessions including sessions on plant physiology and nutrition, breeding genetics and phenomics, pest management, pollination, production systems and sustainability, berry composition and post-harvest.

I was lucky enough to register and present at the conference and it has been fantastic to be able to listen to all the amazing research and work that is happening in the blueberry industry world-wide.

There has been so much information covered over the course of the Vaccinium Symposium, it is not possible to summarise things into one journal article.

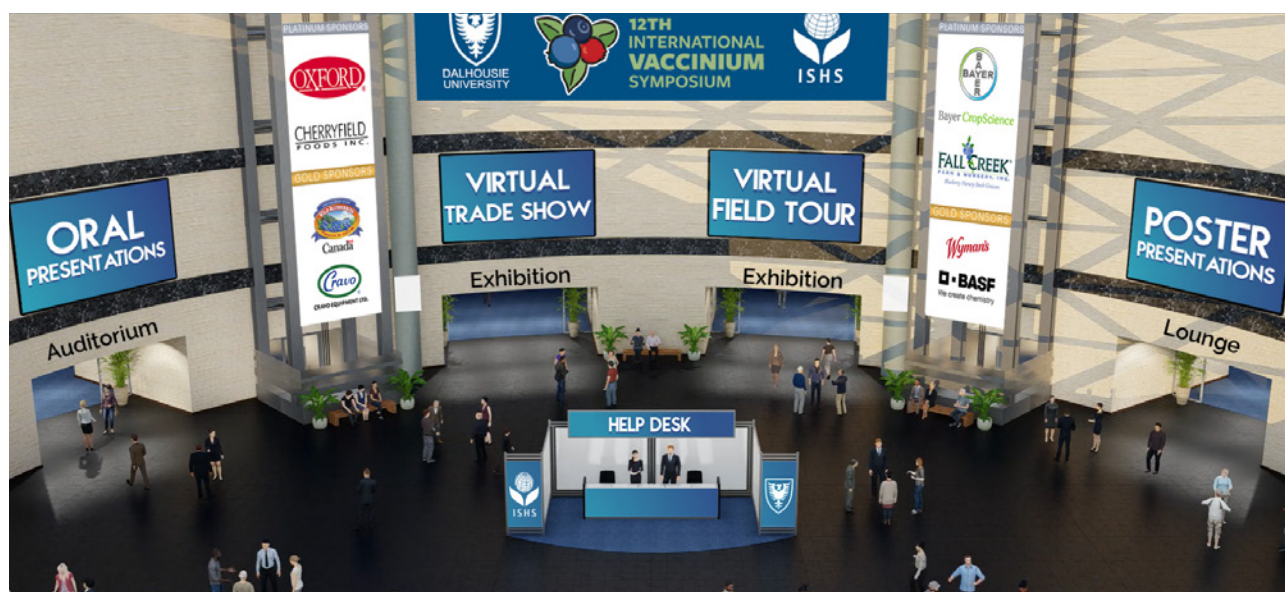


Figure 1. 12<sup>th</sup> International Vaccinium Symposium virtual lobby. Photo credit: ISHS

Instead, I will be putting out short articles in the upcoming editions which will cover each of the themes of the conference. These articles will also be made available on the [berries.net.au](http://berries.net.au) website for those who are interested in learning more about the latest research in all things blueberry.

As part of the conference, they had several pre-recorded field tours that you could log on to watch. In the highbush blueberry session, they went to Blueberry Acres - one of the larger producers in the Nova Scotia area - where Bobby Kidston gave an overview of the operation (Figure 2). They currently have over 210 acres with over 30 different varieties.

The key focus they have when choosing and keeping varieties is choosing those that are machine harvestable.

The operation has recently purchased a custom-built on-target spray unit from Oregon which can spray five rows at one time (Figure 3). It uses electrostatic nozzles which means that they can keep their spray volume low whilst still achieving thorough coverage.

They have found that the surface leaf coverage from this spray unit is 10 times what they were achieving from their traditional tractor and pull behind spray unit and can cover much more ground with a single spray tank.



**Figure 2. Bobby Kidston (Nova Agri) & Sonny Murray (Perennia) at Blueberry Acres in Nova Scotia, Canada.** Photo credit: ISHS



**Figure 3. Custom built spray unit demonstrated on the virtual field tour.** Photo credit: ISHS