

U.K.-based Soft fruit expert [Chambers](#) is launching a major independent raspberry varietal trial that it says spans plants from nine countries and represents a review of 47 different commercially licensed varieties.

The large trial, which will last until at least December 2021 and is believed to be the first of its kind in the UK, will be run from Chambers' Homefield Farm in North Kent and will provide an opportunity for propagators to see how their plants deliver against a range of criteria.

Some 150 plants per variety are in the trial, in which Chambers' team will be assessing the raspberries according to yield, color, firmness, shape, size, flavor and shelf life.

"This is a really exciting project which we have been planning since last year," said Salih Hodzhov, Production Director for Chambers.

"As a major grower, we are working alongside propagators and other growers - whether from the UK or overseas - to help them benefit from a free trial. This will enable them to provide constructive feedback on the performance of their products as part of an independent initiative ... all being reviewed at the same time, in the same place."

Each plant's ability to thrive will be apparent by ease of growing, resistance to disease and pests and overall plant husbandry.

The trial includes a broad selection of raspberry varieties ranging from a Canadian raspberry introduced as far back as 1978, to more recently licensed varieties including those introduced to the market in 2020.

"Buyers from the major multiples are increasingly specifying key attributes from their raspberry suppliers and this trial will provide strong evidence for growers to support the buying process," Hodzhov said.

"We are very grateful to have been able to enlist the support of Mark Coxeter, whose experience in plant genetic licensing is renowned in the industry and whose expertise has been instrumental in getting this sizeable project up and running. There has already been significant interest amongst the key retailers, many of whom have expressed a desire to visit the site and witness at first hand the scale of the trial."

The USA and The Netherlands have a strong number of entries. Scotland, England and Bulgaria have submitted what are anticipated to be high performing varieties. Other countries involved in the trial are Canada, Italy, France, and Poland.