**Niwot Double-Cropping Black Raspberry**  
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My presentation is about my new primocane-fruiting black raspberry named Niwot.

My work with primocane-fruiting black raspberries started with the discovery in 1986 of a wild black raspberry plant that was ripening fruit in October. Years of breeding from this start produced an initial candidate for commercialization, the Explorer black raspberry, distributed for trials in 2004-2006.

While the evaluation trials for Explorer were ongoing, I made another selection, recently called PT-2A4, that looked promising, with bigger berries and more productive compared to Explorer. PT-2A4 was clearly a better selection than Explorer, showing good crops on both floricane and primocane crops, but, in 2006 when the new selection was made, I did not want to disturb the Explorer commercialization project, so I kept the new selection, PT-2A4, in my back pocket for possible use later.

In spite of high hopes for Explorer, it was discovered in 2008 during evaluation trials that Explorer was not self fruitful and required an outside source of pollen. At that point, work to commercialize Explorer was terminated. Careful testing of PT-2A4 in 2008 showed that it was indeed self-fruitful, which was a great relief, so PT-2A4 became my new candidate for commercialization. The selection has been named 'Niwot' after a village in the vicinity of my garden, and a plant patent has been filed.

The Niwot floricane crop, at least for me in summer 2013, was one week earlier than Jewel and more productive. The comparison was made on Niwot plants that had been planted from green plugs (albeit with a bit of extra head-start under lights) in 2012. The Jewel comparison plants were planted as bare root stock at the same time in 2012. In my experience, the Niwot floricane crop per plant was larger than the Jewel crop per plant, although the Niwot floricane berries are slightly smaller than Jewel. Niwot also continued to ripen berries for several days after Jewel had finished its season.

The Niwot primocane crop starts in late August or early September, the schedule being very much dependent on the growing conditions earlier in the year, particularly in spring. My primocane crop for 2013 started about three weeks later than the primocane crop for 2012. Berries of the Niwot primocane crop tend to be larger than Jewel floricane berries. The 2013 primocane crop was even more productive than the 2013 floricane crop.

Because of the quality of cropping in both the floricane season and primocane season, I consider Niwot to be more than just primocane-fruiting, so I call it a double-cropping black raspberry.
Two pruning options are available to optimize Niwot growth to the grower's wishes: tip pruning or not tip pruning the primocanes and retaining or not retaining floricanes. Further information on pruning primocane-fruiting black raspberries is in a file that can be found by doing a web search on: Pete Tallman raspberry pruning.

Hardiness and disease resistance for Niwot are not fully known yet. We have seen good results for Niwot in USDA hardiness zones 5 to 7. One of the cooperating testers claims that the canes survived over a USDA Zone 3 winter, with canes surviving the winter to produce florican berries. However, compared to something like Pequot, Niwot is probably not the best candidate. There is little disease pressure in my Colorado garden, and few observations of resistance or susceptibility are available.

Propagation of Niwot is being ramped up, and plants are expected to be available in some form from Nourse Farms for 2015 spring planting; these are likely to be dormant tissue-culture plugs. There are a few plants available in 2014, but not in commercial quantities.

References:

U.S. Plant Patent 17,727 gives details and background of the Explorer black raspberry.

An article in the NABGA conference proceedings for 2007 gives more background of my primocane-fruiting black raspberry breeding project and Explorer.

Web page, search on: Pete Tallman Raspberries
Pete Tallman is an amateur, backyard raspberry breeder. Pete grew up in central New Hampshire, surrounded by all manner of wild fruits, including blueberries, blackberries, and red and black raspberries, along with the apples and pears his parents had planted. He spent a long career in computer design engineering in the Hudson Valley, New York. Outside of work, his hobby was vegetable and fruit growing, which served as an antidote to the nanosecond world of computer engineering. In the summer he would spend hours gathering black raspberries from the local roadsides to stock the freezer for the winter. His black raspberry breeding activity started with the 1986 discovery near his home of an unusual wild black raspberry plant that was ripening fruit in October. In 1993, Pete relocated to Colorado for a job change, still in computer design, and he took the black raspberry project to Colorado with him. Pete retired in 2003 and lives just outside Boulder, Colorado with his wife Ellen on a fruit-filled acre of apples, pears, cherries, grapes, blueberries, and raspberries. Nearby live their daughter Kate, her husband, and their two lovely girls ages 1 and 4. Their son Michael lives in Salt Lake City with his wife and their handsome 2-year-old son, who is already being groomed for a future position on the US Ski Team.