

# SUNDAYS

## Alaska Indigenous performers attend Smithsonian Folklife Festival

By Nancy Carol James, Ph.D.

From June 26 to July 1, The Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., hosted the festival "Indigenous Voices of the Americas: Celebrating the National Museum of the American Indian."

Held near the Capitol on the National Mall, audiences enjoyed performances from Indigenous singers, dancers and storytellers. Thoughtful dialogue took place about the Indigenous voice while chefs served Native foods. In short, Washington, D.C., celebrated the Indigenous voice to appreciate and enthusiastic international crowds of people.

Participants from Alaska played a central role at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Phillip Blanchett presented several Arctic games, highlighting Indigenous athletes. In particular, he explained the procedure of the One Foot High Kick, performed by athletes London Walker and Peter

Griggs. Their demonstrations presented a picture of balance, composure and skill, causing the watching crowd to clap spontaneously. Of the kicks, Blanchett explained it's "balance and control — that is what the elders want to see."

Blanchett presented the wonders of the Indigenous cultures of Alaska to crowds of people. Following the demonstration, spectators asked question after question of Blanchett. He described Utiqavik's games performed during the Christmas holiday season as well as games performed for the celebration of whaling.

"Different regions do different games," he said.

Blanchett highlighted the then-upcoming World Eskimo-Indian Olympics in Fairbanks at the Big Dipper Ice Arena.

The charisma of Blanchett and Griggs released a wave of interest and admiration from the international spectators, accomplishing



MARIA JAMES PHOTO  
(Above) London Walker demonstrates the One-Foot High Kick.

the Smithsonian's goal of the festival — celebrating the Indigenous voices of the Americas. The recognition of Alaska's Indigenous voice was a highlight of the Smithsonian festival.

Dr. Nancy James is an adjunct professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, who attended the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Maria James is a professional photographer.



MARIA JAMES PHOTO  
From left, Phillip Blanchette, Peter Griggs and London Walker took part in a folk festival in June in Washington, D.C., during which they presented Alaska Native athletic games, such as the One-Foot High Kick.

### GARDENING

## Growing raspberries in Alaska

By Heidi Rader

Most gardeners I know tend to be fairly haphazard with their raspberry patches, myself included. This laxity works because raspberries tend to spread on their own (much more than you might want in some cases) and come back year after year without too much effort. However, with some forethought to the soil, attention to the variety you're planting, and regular pruning, you can maximize the quality and production of your raspberry patch.

Raspberries are one of my favorite berries to eat, fresh or frozen. Although American red raspberries (*Rubus idaeus* L.) grow wild throughout Alaska, they can be annoyingly small and wormy, although their intense taste does compensate somewhat for these drawbacks. But in my backyard, I'd rather grow larger, more productive cultivars of raspberries.

Raspberries also meet most of my criteria when



choosing what to grow. They are a high-dollar item, best fresh, highly perishable, can be eaten without cooking, can be harvested successively, and are something my

family will eat as much of as I can grow. As with strawberries, there is much to learn about maximizing production.

#### Choosing raspberry

cultivars to grow Depending on the region of Alaska you live in and the growing conditions there, consider these important factors when starting a raspber-

ry patch and choosing which variety to grow.

The roots and crowns of raspberry plants are perennial and generally have a lifespan of 10-15 years. However, the



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**Plant raspberries in well-drained soil, with a good layer of organic matter and mulch and a soil pH of 5.6 to 6.5.**

canes are biennials. In the first year, the cane is called a primocane; in the second year, it is called a floricanne. Raspberries can be divided into two main categories — summer-bearing (floricane-fruiting) or fall-bearing (primocane-fruiting or ever-bearing).

It's important to know which type of raspberry you're growing, how to prune it and ensure that you have a variety that will bear fruit early enough to harvest before

RASPBERRIES • D2



Newly planted raspberry bushes start their slow growth to producing.



Raspberries come in two varieties: summer-bearing and autumn-bearing.