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College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences

Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News

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A newsletter for commercial growers of fruit and vegetable crops

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle

Address any questions or comments regarding this newsletter to the individual authors listed after each article or to its editor, Rick Weinzierl, 217-244-2126, weinzierl@illinois.edu. The *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is available on the web at: <http://ipm.illinois.edu/ifvn/>. To receive email notification of new postings of this newsletter, call or write Rick Weinzierl at the number or email address above.

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Upcoming Programs

Check the Illinois SARE calendar for a full list of programs and links for registration.

<http://illinoissare.org/> and <http://illinoissare.org/calendar.php>

Also see the University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Team's web site at:

<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/smallfarm/> and their calendar of events at

<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/units/calendar.cfm?UnitID=629>.

Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organics Conference, January 7-9, 2015, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Center, Springfield, IL. See <http://www.specialtygrowers.org/iscaoc-conference.html> for the program ... scroll down to and click on the link that reads, "[Download 2015 Pre-Conference Program and Registration Form](#)."

- **Putting Small Acres to Work Workshop, November 1, 2014.** 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon. For more information and to register, see <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=10940>
- **Organic Gardening Day, November 1, 2014.** 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Urbana Plaza Hotel and Convention Center (formerly the Holiday Inn) in Urbana. For more information and to register, see <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/units/event.cfm?UnitID=629&EventID=66842>
- **Working Towards a Thriving Year-Round Local Food System with High Tunnels Workshop, November 3, 2014.** 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Lincoln Land Community College - Workforce Careers Center, Springfield. For more information and to register, see <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=10896>.
- **Fall Cover Crop Field Day, November 6, 2014.** Ewing Demonstration Center, Ewing, IL. Registration and refreshments, 8:30 a.m.; program 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. The Ewing Demonstration Center is located 20 minutes south of Mt. Vernon at 16132 N. Ewing Rd; Ewing IL 62836, on the north edge of the village of Ewing, north

of the Ewing Grade School on north Ewing Road. Watch for signs. For more information, see <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/units/event.cfm?UnitID=629&EventID=66921> or call the Franklin Co. Extension Office at 618-439-3178.

- **Good Ag Practices Workshop, November 11, 2014.** 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., University of Illinois Extension Office, 1209 Wenthe Dr., Effingham. For more information and to register, see <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=11021>
- **2014 Local and Regional Food Summit, November 13, 2014.** 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Heartland Community College, Astroth Community Education Center, 1500 West Raab Road, Normal, IL. Hosted by the Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Department of Agriculture and Heartland Community College. Conference registration fee is \$20 per participant and includes all conference materials, lunch, and breaks. Register at <http://www.ilfb.org/ifb-news-and-events/conferences-events/2014-local-and-regional-food-summit.aspx>. Register in advance; space is limited. A special Meet the Farmer/Meet the Buyer event for farmers and buyers will take place between 3:15 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. for farmers attending the Summit.
- **Good Agricultural Practices Workshop, December 4, 2014.** Jefferson County Extension Office in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Call Laurie George, 618-242-0780, for more information.
- **2015 Horseradish Growers Conference, January 22, 2015.** Madison-Monroe-St Clair Extension Unit Branch Office, Collinsville, IL. Contact Elizabeth Wahle at wahle@illinois.edu.
- **Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association Annual Conference and Tradeshow, January 29-31, 2015.** Crowne Plaza, Springfield, IL. IGGVA contact: Bradley Beam, bradleybeam@gmail.com. University of Illinois I Extension contact: Elizabeth Wahle, wahle@illinois.edu.
- **Commercial Tree Fruit Schools, February 3 and 4, 2015.** February 3 at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon Illinois; 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. February 5 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Hardin, Illinois; 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For Mount Vernon, contact Laurie George at 618-242-0780 or ljgeorge@illinois.edu. For Hardin, contact Ken Johnson at kjohnso@illinois.edu.
- **Stateline Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, February 5, 2015.** Rockford, IL, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Details to be announced soon.
- **2015 Gateway Small Fruit and Vegetable Conference, February 10-11, 2015.** (New name and location! Formerly the Illinois Small Fruit & Strawberry Schools and Southern Illinois Commercial Vegetable School previously held in Mt Vernon, now serving commercial growers throughout southern Illinois and Missouri.) Regency Conference Center, O'Fallon, IL. Contact: Elizabeth Wahle at wahle@illinois.edu.

Regional Reports

From Southern Illinois ... Despite some warm temperatures in the 80s early in the week, things seem to be more fall-like with highs in the 60s and the forecast of low temperatures in around freezing by late this week into the weekend. To date (October 29) we have not had any wide-spread frosts, however, at the family farm in Monroe County we have had enough frost to defoliate pumpkins in a low lying area and leave some injury on remaining pumpkin fruit, especially white varieties and many of those in the winter squash family with tender skins. Generally the soil has been dry until some rain (around 0.7" in Murphysboro) early Tuesday morning.

Most farmers' markets are finished for the season or are finishing soon. With the lack of widespread frost, greens are still very plentiful. Apple harvest is winding down, with most of the harvest completed. Overall it was an average apple crop yield, but quality was very good. This year's pumpkin crop was also very good. However, due to the cool temperatures this summer, many long-season varieties such as 'Fairytale' struggled to mature. Despite the slow growth, the fruit size I have seen on this variety has been exceptional with some fruits weighing close to 40 lbs!

Cover crops have also benefited from our modest temperatures and rainfall. Most plantings have established very well. It is too late for crops such as oilseed radishes and oats, as they winter-kill and while they will germinate, they will not have enough time to grow to give any benefit. It is also too late for many of the clovers. Crimson clover will germinate and survive for a while but typically, if planted this late, it does not have a strong enough root system to prevent frost heaving and subsequent desiccation of the plant. By this time of the year, cereal rye and some of the other cereal grains are the best options. Cereal rye is probably the best option as it will tolerate the cold and can often be successfully planted in southern Illinois even into early or mid-November.

Nathan Johannning (618-687-1727; njohann@illinois.edu)

From western Illinois ... What a beautiful fall for pumpkins! And what a crop! I don't know that we've ever had the numbers of pumpkins that we have this year. And the size was excellent as well. I don't know of too many pumpkin growers complaining about this year's crop.

We're expecting our first killing frost this weekend, so most of the summer vegetables will cease then. Although with the decreased hours of sunshine and cooler temperatures, production was very poor anyway. The cool season crops are loving the moisture and weather of late. Cole crops, kale, greens and others are plodding along, although I think some of the cloudy and foggy weather of the past month may be reducing growth somewhat.

Our plasticulture berries that were planted August 23 still have quite a bit of growth to achieve before dormancy. The plants are huge and we've cut numerous runners. Occasionally a branch crown can be found, but it's not very common. We'll place light-weight row covers on this week to attempt to keep some heat and allow for more crowns to form. We've always had issues in getting sufficient branch crown numbers to allow for a single year crop here.

If you plan on seeding any cover crops at this late date, about the only one to recommend would be cereal rye. We've been using cereal rye to plant pumpkins into for a number of years now, and often don't plant the rye until November 1. It may or may not emerge this year, but it has always survived and produced ample growth the following spring.

Greens in the high tunnel are thriving. The first romaine and head lettuce harvest is occurring on those crops. Spinach is still 10-14 days from harvest. There are still other crops in tunnels (tomatoes, peppers, etc.) that although harvest has slowed considerably, are still producing. Remember that sanitizing the interior of the tunnel as well as all tools, equipment, stakes, etc. can help reduce disease pressure next season.

Mike Roegge (217-223-8380; roeggem@illinois.edu)

Fruit Production and Pest Management

Midwest Tree Fruit Spray Guide and Midwest Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide Survey of Usage and Value

Fruit growers in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Wisconsin are asked to participate in an online survey to determine the usage and value of the ***Midwest Tree Fruit Spray Guide*** and the ***Midwest Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide***. Please use this link to access and complete the survey: https://jfe.qualtrics.com/form/SV_b7Nenj3QQE4aqZ7. This survey is completely voluntary and anonymous and should take about 15 minutes. You may skip questions you are not comfortable answering. Your responses will not be linked to you by name; all data will be combined and used in summary form only. Results of the survey will be used to quantify the value of the spray guides and determine the best way to deliver this information in the future.

If you have questions, please contact Nicole Ward Gauthier, a plant pathologist who contributes content to these publications every year, at the University of Kentucky ... 859-323-1961 or nicole.ward@uky.edu.

I strongly encourage Illinois fruit growers to complete this survey ... continued publication of these spray guides depends on information about their use by growers.

Rick Weinzierl (217-244-2126; weinzier@illinois.edu)

Vegetable Production and Pest Management

Fall Weed Control

Fall is the perfect time for growers to control several problematic weeds. During this time growers can apply moderate rates of herbicides to ensure good weed control before spring planting. In general, anytime between October and the first week of December could be a good time for fall herbicide applications. Probably some growers are still busy with harvest, but now is still a good time to think about options for the next spring.

For systemic herbicides, moderately warm conditions are best to facilitate the herbicide movement into plants. Late December applications with very cold weather are less effective than fall applications to control weeds such as dandelion or thistle. Fall applications can help growers to eliminate weeds that can overwinter and have a harmful effect during the emergence of your crop in spring. Poor or no weed control during fall may lead to serious problems in spring, especially with winter annuals such as mare's tail or chickweed.

At this time of the year the main goal is efficient control of all emerged weeds. Effective fall weed control should improve your seedbed in spring when burn-down herbicides and other practices can be used to kill the small weeds emerged prior to planting. It has been suggested that this winter may be colder than usual again, so we don't recommend soil-residual herbicides for this fall. Under cold weather conditions, herbicide soil persistence can be longer than the usual, affecting the proper emergence or injuring your following crop.

Information on fall-applied herbicides (focused mainly on field crops, but still relevant for vegetable growers) is available at <http://bulletin.ipm.illinois.edu/?p=2813>

Connie Echaz (847-223-8627; cechaz@illinois.edu)

Local Foods Issues

USDA Collecting Chemical Use Data

Throughout the fall and early winter, corn and vegetable growers in the United States will be asked to provide first-hand information on their production practices by participating in the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) and the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey, conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). These surveys will give corn and vegetable producers the opportunity to explain how they use fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, and manage pests. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) periodically conducts a review of tolerance levels for re-registration of pesticide products, and part of the review includes evaluating USDA's estimates on agricultural chemical use. Growers' responses help ensure that data used to determine environmental policies accurately reflect pesticide and fertilizer usage.

In Illinois, data will be collected for field corn, fresh market sweet corn, pumpkins, and snap beans for processing. Between October 1 and January 10, NASS representatives will be conducting in-person interviews with growers to gather information on their fertilizer and chemical use and pest management practices. As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses and publishes only state- and national-level data, ensuring that no individual producer or operation is identified. The results of the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey will be released on NASS's website at www.nass.usda.gov/results on August 5, 2015. The results of the ARMS will be released on NASS's website on May 13, 2015. Please participate in these surveys if you are contacted.

Mark Schleusener, Illinois State Statistician, USDA- NASS (217-524-9606; Mark.Schleusener@nass.usda.gov)

EQIP Application Deadlines (for high tunnel and other assistance)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts. These contracts provide financial assistance for producers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. In addition, a purpose of EQIP is to help producers meet Federal, State, Tribal and local environmental regulations. Throughout Illinois, producers have received assistance to implement conservation practices that include, but are not limited to, nutrient management, cover crops, terraces, grassed waterways, manure management facilities, and pasture management. For fruit and vegetable growers, high tunnel programs and pollinator habitat programs may be especially relevant. Applications for EQIP are accepted on a continuous basis; however Illinois NRCS has established two application cutoff dates: **November 21, 2014, and January 16, 2015.** See http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/il/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=nrcs141p2_030467.

Mary Hosier (217-333-7512; mhosier@illinois.edu)

University of Illinois Extension Educators and Specialists in Fruit and Vegetable Production and Pest Management

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