



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News

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Editors: Nathan Johannig & Bronwyn Aly

A newsletter to provide timely, research-based information that commercial fruit & vegetable growers can apply to benefit their farming operations.

Address any questions or comments regarding this newsletter to the individual authors listed after each article or to its editors, Nathan Johannig, 618-939-3434, njohann@illinois.edu or Bronwyn Aly 618-695-6060, baly@illinois.edu. The *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is available on the web at: <http://ipm.illinois.edu/ifvn/>. To receive or be removed from email notification of new postings of this newsletter, contact Nathan Johannig or Bronwyn Aly at the phone numbers or email addresses above.

In this issue...

- **Upcoming programs** (listings for beginning and established growers)
- **News & Announcements** (2021 Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable Virtual School – February 10, 2021, M-CERF Illinois Producer Survey, Local Food Systems and Small Farms Extension Educator Team Continues To Grow, Illinois Pesticide Applicator Training and Testing)
- **Regional Reports** (southwestern Illinois (Waterloo), southern Illinois (Murphysboro), Dixon Springs)
- **Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management** (Farms needed for No-till, Cover Crop Tomato & Pepper Demonstration Trials, 2020 Pumpkin Variety Trial Yields & Videos Released, Weather Review: Warm, Dry End to 2020, New Asparagus Varieties and Sources)
- **Less Seriously**
- **University of Illinois Extension Educators and Specialists in Fruit and Vegetable Production and Pest Management**

Upcoming Programs

See the **University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Team's** website at: <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/smallfarm/> and the calendar of events at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/units/calendar.cfm?UnitID=629>.

- **2021 Small Farms Winter Webinar Series, Thursdays starting at noon, from January 21 - March 25, 2021.** Plan to spend your lunch hours learning more about local food and small farm related topics this coming year. Registration information coming soon!
- **Purdue Extension Vegetable Farming Webinar Series, Every Wednesday in February, starting February 3, 2021, 2 PM to 4 PM EST.** For more information or to register visit <https://www.indianahortconference.org/>.
- **2021 Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School, Wednesday, February 10, 2021.** See registration information and conference details below!
- **2021 25th Annual Stateline Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference.** This year, our conference will be delivered via the Zoom platform. Because of the breadth of content, our conference will be held over multiple dates. These webinars will be held live. The core of the program, fruit and vegetable disease and

insect updates from Drs. Mohammad Babadoost and Kacie Athey, Extension Specialists with University of Illinois Extension, will occur on the following dates:

- o Thursday, February 18 (Fruit Track) 1:00-3:30PM
- o Thursday, February 25 (Vegetable Track) 1:00-3:30PM

To compliment these tracks, we have scheduled additional sessions on Fridays in February. These Zoom sessions will be held from 12-1PM.

- o Friday, February 12 - Hard Cider Production, Carla Snyder, Penn State Extension
- o Friday, February 19 - Pumpkin Varieties, Nathan Johanning, University of Illinois Extension
- o Friday, February 26 - High Tunnel Production Updates, Bronwyn Aly, University of Illinois Extension

Registration and more information will be coming at the start of the year.

News & Announcements

2021 Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable Virtual School – February 10, 2021

Registration is now open for the 2021 Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable Virtual School scheduled for February 10, starting at 8AM <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=22920>. Once you have registered, you will receive an email with the link to the program. The program will include three consecutive tracks, beginning with tree fruit, then small fruit, and finishing with vegetables. After each session, there will be a live question and answer with the session speakers. There is no charge for the program, but you will have the opportunity to order and have shipped to you the 2021 pest management guides. The cost for the 2021 Midwest Fruit Pest Management Guide is \$20.00 (includes shipping), and it is expected to ship after the program sometime in February. The 2021 Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers is available for \$25.00 (including shipping) and will be available at the time of ordering. For assistance or additional questions, call 618-344-4230.

Elizabeth Wahle (618-344-4230; wahle@illinois.edu)

M-CERF Illinois Producer Survey

University of Illinois Extension Cook County is collaborating with researchers from Illinois Institute of Technology and DePaul University, who are mapping the contributions of local farmers and food producers within a 300 mile radius of Chicagoland. Other partners include Chicago Food Policy Action Council and the Illinois Stewardship Alliance.

The survey is designed to understand what types of “good food” practices local farmers are already doing and the benefits and challenges of implementing such practices. “Good food” practices relate to safety, nutrition, environment, labor, animal welfare and local economy, and are increasingly in demand by institutional and retail customers.

Individual response will be CONFIDENTIAL and only the aggregated results will be shared with participants and stakeholders. Farmers will be able to see how they compare to their peers across the region. Other stakeholders will use the results to inform outreach and training to enable more local farmers to participate in “good food” purchasing contracts with Chicago and Cook County institutions, as well as sell to food hubs and aggregators interested in such practices.

As a token of appreciation for farmers time and willingness to share information, a \$20 gift card will be offered to the first 200 farmers who complete the survey. **If you are a farmer (urban or rural) within a 300 mile radius of Chicago [please click this link to participate](#).**

Kathryn Pereira (773-233-2900; kpereira@illinois.edu)

Local Food Systems and Small Farms Extension Educator Team Continues To Grow



[Nick Frillman](#) joined Illinois Extension in January as a [Local Foods and Small Farms](#) Educator serving [Woodford, Livingston and McClean counties](#). He will work to develop and deliver research-based programs, collaborate with small farm producers and partners, and extend university resources in Central Illinois. A fourth-generation graduate from University of Illinois, Frillman has a B.A. with a double major of Political Science and Spanish and a M.S. in Crop Science with a focus on crop production. Before joining Illinois Extension, Frillman completed a field season of CSA and farmers' market style production at a small "beyond-organic" vegetable farm in Sandy, Oregon.

His research focuses on non-chemical weed control strategies, and establishment, monitoring and harvesting strategies for black currant and other woody perennial crops.

"I enjoy doing research projects that can have powerful and positive consequences for small farms and local businesses," Frillman says. "As an Extension educator, I am excited that my research and work will serve producers directly." Frillman plans to provide programs related to non-chemical weed control strategies, soil fertility, solanaceous vegetable production, cover cropping, and market development strategies for food-grade grain.

Nick is based in the Extension office in Bloomington, IL, and can be reached at 309-663-8306 or by email at frillma2@illinois.edu, so be sure to reach out and welcome him to the Illinois specialty crops family.

Illinois Pesticide Applicator Training and Testing

From the Illinois Extension Pesticide Safety Education Program. If your Illinois Pesticide Applicator license expired in 2019 or 2020, you will need to renew. There will be no in-person PSEP Training Clinics again this year and only limited in-person testing sessions for 2020-2021. Training has moved to an online format and have been designed to prepare applicators and operators for certification exams, and they can be completed at your own pace. Testing will also be online and exams for every category of licensure will be available by early 2021. Exam sessions will be individually scheduled with a remote proctoring service. In-Person Testing will be available on a limited basis, starting January 2021 at the earliest. For complete details <https://extension.illinois.edu/psep/training-testing>

Growers are encouraged to register early and plan ahead if they need to renew. You have to create two accounts if you want to do the training and testing online (on account for each). This is all addressed at the website above but does take a little time hence the advice to plan ahead and not wait.

Regional Reports

From southwestern Illinois (Waterloo)... Winter has been fairly calm and uneventful in this part of the state. We had a few rounds of light snow, just enough to bring a white cast to the ground, a few times but nothing more than that. About a week ago we had a run of very cloudy, gloomy days, but since we finally had a break with some sunshine the last few days. Temperatures have varied but overall, I would say average to a little above. Mostly our highs have been in the 30s and 40s with a few days getting up to about 50°. Lows have mainly been in the 20s at the coldest, with just a couple of nights colder than that. The ground has froze a little on top a few nights but not froze reliably to the point you could get out with equipment on ground that would otherwise be too soft. We haven't had the typical spell of subfreezing days that most winters bring as of yet. We are far from out of the woods so time will tell. We really have not had any significant precipitation in the last week or two and the soil is starting to get dry enough to support equipment and pruning work without being a mess.

There is not a lot going on out in the field besides some pruning and maintenance on our fruit crops. As we get closer to spring it will be time for some of our last dormant sprays on fruit crops before bud break. Refer to the [Midwest Fruit Pest Management Guide](#) for more details on products and timings for these applications. Cover crops are in that typical mid-winter holding pattern until we break for warmer conditions closer to spring. Under cover many have or will be thinking about starting some early vegetable transplants soon. Within the next month many tomatoes and peppers will be started in the greenhouse, especially for high tunnel transplants.

I want to make a quick plug for two items I wrote later in this issue: videos released from our pumpkin variety trial and a call for application to host an on farm no-till demonstration trial for no-till transplanting of tomatoes or peppers. Please take a look at these articles if this interests you!

Nathan Johannig (618-939-3434; njohann@illinois.edu)

From southern Illinois (Murphysboro)... There is not much activity going on outside here at Jackson County, but these sunny mid 40s days have me itching to get back into the field. We do still have some greens including kale, swiss chard, and spinach. There are also 2 parsley varieties that we overwintered in the tunnel, and I have a single floret on the broccoli I transplanted. As I said, we have mostly had high 30s to 40s temperatures during the day, with only a few truly cold days and nights. The next two weeks are forecasted in the 40s with night temperatures in the upper 20s. I am pouring over seed catalogs and making trial plans for the 2021 growing season.



Photos: (left) overwintered parsley; (right) broccoli floret from high tunnel at Jackson Co. Extension office. Photos by K. Bell.

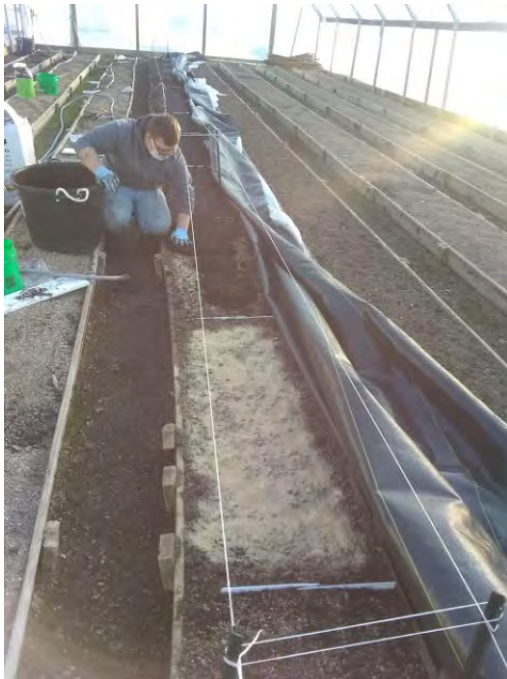
One thing I have been doing in the high tunnel is cleaning and reorganizing. I have harvested all the carrots, beets, and radishes that were planted this fall and removed any of the debris left over. Now is also a good time to pull weeds, remove any other old plants, and any other trash. I have also been going over the high tunnel checking for wear and tear and any winter damage. Make sure seeding trays and pots are clean, and if you are recycling trays they should be cleaned and disinfected.

Katie Bell (618-687-1727; klbell@illinois.edu)

From Dixon Springs Ag Center... Activities during the last month, while at a slower pace than during the busy summer months, include cleaning and sanitizing various components within the hydroponic system (dutch buckets, lettuce table rails, irrigation plumbing, trellis spools, etc.), finalizing seed and supply orders, seed starting, and caring for the crops growing in the high tunnels over the winter.

The mushroom demonstration plots have not produced any mushrooms yet. Temperature fluctuation has been extreme within the tunnel, ranging from 70s-80s in the sun to nighttime temperatures down in the mid-20s. The first week of January, we added supplement to the mushroom plots, applying either cottonseed meal, rice bran meal, or soybean meal. We then added an inch of peat moss over the top. Since there has been a few spots of some other mold or fungus growing that watering seemed to kill, the plots were watered in after topping with peat moss.

Growth on the lettuce, spinach, kale, and carrots has been almost non-existent, but as of the end of last week, daylight hours have increased enough to hit the magic 10 hours/day mark, and we expect to start seeing more growth as over the next couple of weeks as the plants begin to respond to the longer days. We are still having rodent issues in a couple of rows within the tunnel. Feeding damage from either a vole, mouse, or rabbit (or a combination) within a few of the research plots is pretty severe. Repellants and trapping have not been successful to date so the next control measure will be bait stations. I believe the most damage is coming from voles enjoying the warm black plastic mulch canopy we created for them. We had been fortunate to not have much insect pressure, but this past week a spray application of BeLeaf was made to knock back an increasing aphid population.





*Top left: Remington Curry, high school intern, spreading peat moss over supplements in mushroom plots at DSAC.
 Top right: rodent damage in winter vegetable plots at DSAC with worst damage seen in the plastic plots.
 Bottom left: vegetable, herb, and pollinator plant seeds being germinated using a heat mat at DSAC.
 Bottom right: carrot tops infested with aphids in high tunnel at DSAC. Photos by B. Aly*

Bronwyn Aly (618-382-2662; baly@illinois.edu)

Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management

Farms needed for No-till, Cover Crop Tomato & Pepper Demonstration Trials

We are in need of some host farms to trial no-till transplanting of tomato or peppers! Through an Illinois Specialty Crop Block Grant, we are doing research on integrating cover crops into bareground, plasticulture and no-till production of tomatoes and peppers. In addition to replicated research trials, we plan to do some on-farm demonstrations of the no-till transplanted crops to introduce this to growers and help spread the understanding of how to integrate no-till into these systems.

We are now accepting applications from growers (predominantly from IL, but others may be considered) who would be willing to host a trial strip of some no-till transplanted crops. Here are just a few expectations we would have for this trial.

- Grower would have some established cereal grain (cereal rye preferably, but wheat, barley or triticale also would work)
- Be willing to leave a strip (amount of area is flexible, but ideally 0.1 ac or more) to grow to heading and then no-till transplant into (tomatoes and/or peppers) and compare beside any standard production practice (bareground, plasticulture, etc.)
- Collect some basic data on yield and provide grower feedback on management between standard and no-till system.
- Work with myself to host a small on-farm meeting (if COVID guidelines allow) and/or record some video observations we can share with other growers.

We will bring our no-till transplanter to you for planting and help with getting things set up. We will coordinate ensuring we have transplants and other details. You would need to have roughly a 40-50 hp (minimum) tractor to pull the transplanter.

To apply please email Nathan Johanning at njohann@illinois.edu. Provide your name, contact information and location of the farm, along with a short paragraph describing your farm and why you would like to trial no-till production. For first priority, please email by February 10, 2021. Please contact me if you have any further questions about the project!

Nathan Johanning (618-939-3434; njohann@illinois.edu)

2020 Pumpkin Variety Trial Yields & Videos Released

We now have three new, in-field, videos release of our 2020 Pumpkin Variety Trials at the Belleville Research Center. These were taken at the end of September after all of the plots were harvested with over 50 different varieties of specialty and Jack-O-Lantern pumpkins. Also, the observational yield data is in the table below. Hopefully these will be helpful in your variety selection for the 2021 season!



2020 Specialty Pumpkin Trial

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YLMUx20fws>

2020 Medium Jack-O-Lantern Trial

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V79jdY07CPI>

2020 Large Jack-O-Lantern Trial

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmVBXDz9s8g>

	Variety	Source ¹	Average Fruit Weight (lbs)	Yield (No. fruit/plant)	Color
Specialty Pumpkins					
1	Autumn Buckskin	SW	10.7	1.2	Tan
2	Blue Doll	SW	11.6	0.8	Blue
3	Colorado Sunrise	RI	9.3	1.4	Blue w/ Pink
4	Fairytale	SW	11.2	1.0	Green (Tan at Maturity)
5	Flat White Boer	RI	8.2	0.8	White
6	Jewel Box	SW	13.3	0.6	Tan w/Warts
7	Mellow Yellow	SW	8.2	1.6	Light Yellow
8	Moonshine	SW	5.6	1.6	White
9	Moon Stacker	RI	11.3	1.0	White
10	One Too Many	SW	21.4	0.4	White w/ Red/Orange Veins
11	Peanut	SW	11.6	0.8	Pink w/ Brown/Callused Warts
12	RPX 6889 (Fright)	RU	15.0	1.4	Orange w/ Green Warts
13	RPX 6927 (White Gold)	RU	5.1	1.2	White
14	RPX 6229 (Fools Gold)	RU	9.5	1.0	Tan
15	Specter	HM	11.5	1.2	Creamy White w/ Some Warts

16	New Moon	HO	21.5	0.8	White
17	Polar Bear	JO	28.9	0.8	White
Medium Jack O'Lantern (Under 25 lbs)					
18	Bayhorse Gold	RU	15.0	1.2	Dark Orange
19	Bellatrix	SW	15.7	1.0	Medium Orange
20	Carbonado Gold	RU	12.4	1.8	Dark Orange
21	Cargo	JO	15.8	1.0	Dark Orange
22	Eagle City Gold	RU	15.5	2.0	Dark Orange
23	Early Prince	SY	9.8	2.6	Dark Orange
24	Eros	SW	13.3	1.2	Dark Orange
25	Gladiator	HM	12.1	1.2	Dark Orange
26	Hermes	HM	11.0	1.8	Dark Orange
27	Kratos	HM	14.2	1.2	Dark Orange
28	Magic Wand	HM	12.5	1.6	Dark Orange
29	Orange Sunrise	HM	16.8	0.8	Medium Orange
30	Renegade	JO	13.2	1.4	Dark Orange
31	Rhea	HM	15.9	1.0	Dark Orange
32	RPX 6208	RU	16.9	0.8	Dark Orange
33	RPX 6209	RU	12.5	1.8	Dark Orange
34	Secretariat	SW	12.4	3.0	Medium Orange
35	SIU - 4	SIU	8.9	0.8	Light Orange
36	SIU - 5	SIU	14.2	1.4	Orange
37	SIU - 7	SIU	16.3	1.0	Orange
38	SIU - 15	SIU	14.7	1.6	Medium Orange
39	Skidoo Gold	RU	11.8	2.0	Dark Orange
40	Spartacus	SK	17.4	0.6	Dark Orange
41	Spartan	SW	12.8	1.6	Dark Orange
42	Zeus	HM	11.9	1.8	Dark Orange
Large Jack O'Lantern (Over 25 lbs)					
43	Big Doris	SW	22.5	1.2	Dark Orange
44	Cronus	HM	17.3	1.2	Dark Orange
45	Hulk	SW	20.4	0.6	Dark Orange
46	Igor	JO	17.7	1.4	Dark Orange
47	Large Marge	SW	25.2	1.2	Medium Orange
48	PM 0003 (PM 1745)	SY	25.8	1.6	Dark Orange
49	RPX 6883	RU	23.5	1.2	Dark Orange w/ Green Warts
50	XPU 6002	SK	19.1	1.0	Medium Orange
51	XPU 7704	SK	24.4	1.4	Dark Orange

¹Seed Sources: HM=Harris Moran/HM Clause, HO=Hollar, JO=Johnny's, RU=Rupp, RI=Rispens, SIU=SIU/S. Alan Walters, SK=Sakata, SW=Seedway, SY= Syngenta

Thanks to the [Illinois Specialty Growers Association](#) & [Illinois Vegetable Growers Association](#) for financial support and to all of the seed companies for their seed and financial contributions to this research:

- Harris Moran/HM Clause <https://hmclause.com/>
- Hollar Seeds <http://www.hollarseeds.com/>
- Johnny's Selected Seeds <https://www.johnnyseeds.com/>
- Rispens Seeds, Inc. <https://www.rispenseeds.com/>
- Rupp Seeds <https://www.ruppseeds.com/>
- Sakata Seeds <https://www.sakata.com/>
- Seedway, LLC <https://www.seedway.com/>
- Syngenta <https://www.syngenta-us.com/>

Nathan Johanning (618-939-3434; njohann@illinois.edu)

Weather Review: Warm, Dry End to 2020

December was much warmer and drier than average across Illinois. The preliminary statewide average December temperature was 32.8 degrees, 2.9 degrees above the 30-year normal and tied for the 35th warmest on record. Preliminary statewide average total precipitation for December was 1.78 inches, 0.91 inches less than the 30-year normal, and the 43rd driest on record.

Outlooks

After an active start to January, the Climate Prediction Center's 8- to 14-day outlooks indicate the highest odds of a change to warmer and drier than normal conditions across the state into the second week of January.

The outlooks for the entire month of January lean toward warmer and wetter than normal conditions, suggesting a change to more active winter weather around the middle of the month.

As La Niña conditions are expected to persist into early spring, forecasts from the North American Multi-model Ensemble for February through April favor warmer and wetter conditions through the winter-spring transition.

For the full, detailed monthly overview, including regional details and maps of statewide data, visit the Illinois State Climatologist Website at <https://stateclimatologist.web.illinois.edu/>

Trent Ford, Illinois State Climatologist (217-244-1330; twford@illinois.edu)

New Asparagus Varieties and Sources

For over 30 years, asparagus growers have known about male hybrid varieties that have overtaken the yields of the open-pollinated varieties like Mary Washington. These male hybrids have out-yielded the open-pollinated varieties by 3 to 1. Growers can then start to recoup the costs of their investments earlier.

The New Jersey male hybrids have been very popular with growers since the mid-1980's with varieties such as Jersey Giant, Jersey Supreme, Jersey Knight, and others. Unfortunately, these varieties will no longer be on the market in the future, and it is safe to say that most of the "Jersey" varieties will not be available within the next 3-5 years, with the exception of Walker Deluxe.

New male hybrid varieties for commercial growers will include Walker Deluxe, Atlas, Greenox, Sequoia, Porthos, and Purple Passion, along with Guelph Eclipse, Guelph Equinox and Guelph Millennium. The Guelph varieties are

from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. They produce longer spears than the NJ types that retain tight spear tips that are tender. They also tolerate hot summer temperatures and can withstand cold winter temperatures. Greenox, Sequoia, and Porthos were released from Rutgers University and Vilmorin Seed Co. Walker Deluxe is from Walker Plants and performed the best in the first year of my asparagus variety trial in PA (see table below). Atlas is not a male hybrid but is dioecious, having both male and female plants. It produces tall spears with tight spear tips under warm temperatures but do not tolerate cold winter temperatures like the NJ and University of Guelph types.

**Asparagus Cultivar Trial – Selinsgrove, PA
Carl Cantaluppi, Retired Area Horticulture Agent
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service**

2020

Cultivar	Lbs./A greater than 3/8 inches in diameter	Lbs./A less than 3/8 inches in diameter	Number of spears per plant	Total yield per acre in pounds
Walker Deluxe	250ab ¹	344a	3.7a	594a
Guelph Millennium	113 b	119 b	1.4 b	232 b
Guelph Eclipse	380a	119 b	2.3 b	499ab

¹Yield expressions with the same letter within columns are not statistically significant, Duncan’s Multiple Range Test, 5% level.

One-year-old crowns were planted on April 19, 2019. Eight harvests were taken throughout a three-week period in 2020. First harvest occurred on April 16. Harvest did not resume until May 1 due to frosts. Last harvest occurred on May 8 when the majority of spear diameters started to become less than 3/8 inches in diameter.

A List of Asparagus One-Year-Old Crown Sources and Variety Availability

Scott Walker
Walker Plants
105 Porchtown Rd.
Pittsgrove, NJ 08318
856-358-2548
www.walkerplants.com
Walker Deluxe, Atlas

Tim Nourse
Nourse Farms, Inc.
41 River Rd.
South Deerfield, MA 01373
413-665-2658
www.noursefarms.com
Guelph Millennium, Jersey Supreme, Jersey Knight, Purple Passion

David Daisy
Daisy Farms
28355 Michigan 152
Dowagiac, MI 49047
269-782-6321
www.daisyfarms.net
Porthos, Greenox, Sequoia, Guelph Millennium, Guelph Eclipse, N.J. Hybrids

Richter Farms, LLC
Rt. 2
90487-60th St.
Decatur, MI 49045
269-782-5350
New Jersey Hybrids

Indiana Berry and Plant Co.
2811 Michigan Road
Plymouth, IN 46563
1-800-295-2226
www.indianaberry.com
Guelph Millennium, Jersey Knight, Purple Passion

John Bakker
Michigan Asparagus Research, Inc.
12800 Escanaba Drive, Ste. A
DeWitt, MI 48820
Hart office: 231-873-2740
www.foxseeds.com
Seed of Guelph Millennium, Guelph Equinox, Guelph Eclipse

This source list is intended only as a convenient reference for growers. Inclusion in the list does not imply endorsement, nor does exclusion imply that the plants or seed of a particular source are inferior. The list does not pretend to be exhaustive, and undoubtedly there are other suitable sources of crowns and seed.

For a complete guide to asparagus production, management, and marketing, order my publication, "Asparagus Production From A to Z" by contacting Carl Cantaluppi at carl1954@ptd.net

*Carl Cantaluppi, Retired Area Horticulture Agent, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service,
(carl1954@ptd.net)*

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

Extension Educators – Local Food Systems and Small Farms		
BRONWYN ALY , Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope, Saline, & White counties	618-382-2662	baly@illinois.edu
KATIE BELL , Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph, & Williamson counties	618-687-1727	klbell@illinois.edu
SARAH FARLEY , Lake & McHenry counties	847-223-8627	sfarley@illinois.edu
NICK FRILLMAN , Woodford, Livingston, & McLean counties	309-663-8306	frillma2@illinois.edu
LAURIE GEORGE , Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, & Washington counties	618-548-1446	ljgeorge@illinois.edu
ZACHARY GRANT , Cook County	708-679-6889	zgrant2@illinois.edu
DOUG GUCKER , DeWitt, Macon, & Piatt counties	217-877-6042	dgucker@illinois.edu
ERIN HARPER , Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, & Vermillion counties	217-333-7672	harper7@illinois.edu
GRACE MARGHERIO , Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center, St. Clair County	217-244-3547	gracem@illinois.edu
GRANT MCCARTY , Jo Daviess, Stephenson, & Winnebago counties	815-235-4125	gmccarty@illinois.edu
KATIE PARKER , Adams, Brown, Hancock, Pike & Schuyler counties	217-223-8380	keparkr2@illinois.edu
KATHRYN PEREIRA , Cook County	773-233-2900	kpereira@illinois.edu
JAMES THEURI , Grundy, Kankakee & Will counties	815-933-8337	jtheu50@illinois.edu
Extension Educators – Horticulture		
CHRIS ENROTH , Henderson, Knox, McDonough, & Warren counties	309-837-3939	cenroth@illinois.edu
RICHARD HENTSCHEL , DuPage, Kane, & Kendall counties	630-584-6166	hentschel@illinois.edu
ANDREW HOLSINGER , Christian, Jersey, Macoupin, & Montgomery counties	217-532-3941	aholsing@illinois.edu
Extension Educators – Commercial Agriculture		
ELIZABETH WAHLE , Fruit & Vegetable Production	618-344-4230	wahle@illinois.edu
NATHAN JOHANNING , Madison, Monroe, & St. Clair counties	618-939-3434	njohann@illinois.edu
Campus-based Extension Specialists		
KACIE ATHEY , Entomology	217-244-9916	kathey@illinois.edu
MOHAMMAD BABADOOST , Plant Pathology	217-333-1523	babadoos@illinois.edu

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Illinois Extension
 UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Return Address:

Nathan Johanning
University of Illinois Extension
901 Illinois Avenue; PO Box 117
Waterloo, IL 62298



Illinois Extension
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Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News