



# UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION

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, 217-333-6651, [weinzierl@uiuc.edu](mailto:weinzierl@uiuc.edu). The *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is available on the web at: <http://www.ipm.uiuc.edu/ifvn/index.html>. To receive email notification of new postings of this newsletter, call or write Rick Weinzierl at the number or email address above.

***In this issue*** ... The major portion of this issue of the *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is devoted to information on the upcoming Illinois Specialty Crops and Agritourism Conference scheduled for Jan 9-11, 2008, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, IL. In addition, a new program for consumers – Buy Local, Eat Healthy – is set for January 12 at the same location. Growers, be sure to read through the information presented below on this program as well ... we need you to be present if in fact we're going to help connect Illinois consumers and Illinois producers of fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

### **Upcoming Programs**

**Notes from Chris Doll** (current weather, Great Lakes EXPO, apple varieties, 1955 ISHS news)

**Vegetable Production and Pest Management** (effects of seeding rates of rye cover crop on pumpkin yield)

**University of Illinois Extension Specialists in Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management**

### ***Upcoming Programs***

- January 3, 2008: Illiana Vegetable School, Schererville, IN. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. CST, see: [http://www.hort.purdue.edu/fruitveg/events/ivgs\\_poster08.pdf](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/fruitveg/events/ivgs_poster08.pdf).
- January 8, 2008: Community Supported Agriculture & Collaborative CSAs Workshop, Macomb, IL. 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., McDonough County 4-H Auditorium, University of Illinois McDonough County Extension Office, 3022 West Jackson in Macomb. The registration fee is \$15 and includes resources, refreshments, and lunch. Pre-registration is required by Thursday, January 3, 2008. Please call 309-837-3939 for more information and to register. *Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing, 309-836-8366, e-mail: [ortizrib@uiuc.edu](mailto:ortizrib@uiuc.edu)*.
- January 9-11: 2008, Illinois Specialty Crops and Agritourism Conference, Springfield, IL. (See the detailed information below and <http://www.specialtygrowers.org/pdfs/sgc.pdf>.)
- January 12, 2008: Buy Local, Eat Healthy, Springfield, IL (See the detailed information below and <http://www.specialtygrowers.org/pdfs/sgc.pdf>.)
- January 17-18, 2008: Midwest Organics Conference, Urbana, IL ( <http://orgconf.sustainability.uiuc.edu/Ecard> )
- January 19, 2008: Herb Day, Champaign-Urbana, IL
- January 31, 2008: Illinois Horseradish School, Collinsville, IL
- January 25, 2008: Alternative Crop Production Workshop, Macomb, IL
- February 5, 2008: Southwestern Illinois Tree Fruit School, Hardin, IL
- February 6, 2008: Southern Illinois Tree Fruit School, Mt. Vernon, IL
- February 13, 2008: Southern Illinois Vegetable School, Mt. Vernon, IL
- February 15, 2008: Illinois-Wisconsin Fruit and Vegetable Conference, location to be announced
- February 19, 2008: Western Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School, Quincy, IL
- February 20, 2008: Kankakee Area Vegetable School, Kankakee, IL
- February 21-23, 2008: Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association Annual Meeting, location to be announced
- March 4-5, 2008: Illinois Small Fruit and Strawberry School, Mt. Vernon, IL

## ***2008 Illinois specialty Crops and Agritourism Conference***

The Illinois Specialty Crops and Agritourism Conference will be held January 9-11, 2008, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Illinois. Pre-conference workshops (concurrent) will be offered Wednesday, January 9, highlighting “High Tunnels and Greenhouses for Extending Seasons and Increasing Markets,” and “Growing Grapes in Illinois.” A new program for consumers – “Buy Local, Eat Healthy” – will be held on January 12 at the same location.

The workshop sessions on January 9 provide an opportunity to hear from Lewis Jett, a leading research and extension specialist in high-tunnel production systems and Daniel Warnock, a University of Illinois researcher who is extremely knowledgeable about greenhouse IPM and bedding plant production. In addition, Bret Palmier and Matt Klein bring practical experience as Illinois growers. For the grape workshop, Donn Johnson (entomology) and Dough Doohan (weed science) bring expertise from Arkansas and Ohio, respectively, and Elizabeth Wahle, Brad Taylor, Bill Shoemaker, Mat Stark, and Mohammad Babadoost will provide specifics for Illinois production circumstances.

On Thursday and Friday, January 10-11, the conference will kick off with Charlie Touchette, Executive Director, North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association, as the keynote speaker followed by the traditional concurrent breakout sessions on fruits, vegetables, herbs, and agritourism, with an additional track of programming on marketing, risk management, legal issues, and labor. Friday evening will feature a banquet followed by the announcement of the annual cider contest winners and comments from Andrew McCrea, Oscar-winning syndicated radio broadcaster, popular author, farmer, and rancher.

Peach and apple production will take center stage of the fruit breakout sessions, but talks on insect management in brambles, strawberry production, and production and marketing of paw paws will also be featured. Guido Schnabel, Clemson University, will address brown rot and root rot in peaches, and “Peach Insect Management” and “Insect Management in Brambles” will be the focus of two presentations by Donn Johnson, University of Arkansas. Desmond Layne of Clemson University will talk on canopy management and replant issues for peaches in addition to his topic on paw paws. Janna Beckerman of Purdue University will present information on scab resistance and phytophthora rot in apples. Illinois speakers in the fruit sessions include Jeff Kindhart, Tom Ringhausen, and Rick Weinzierl.

Topics in the vegetable sessions run the gamut from vegetable pest management and production problems to marketing. John Biernbaum, Michigan State University, will discuss vegetable transplant production. Crop production tips for high tunnel systems will be the focus of Lewis Jett of West Virginia University. Other crops to be highlighted are tomatoes, legumes, sweet corn, and peppers. Doug Doohan of Ohio State University will talk on new problem weeds in vegetables, and University of Illinois speakers in the vegetable program include Mohammad Babadoost, Chuck Voigt, Jeff Kindhart, John Masiunas, and Rick Weinzierl.

The agritourism/marketing track will feature sessions on how to design effective market displays, how to promote your business, and how to grow your business by adding value with customer service. Jennifer Dennis, Ross Ament, and Jeff Kindhart kick off the January 10 program on these topics. Annette Meyer-Heisdorffer and Van Ayers, Extension Educators from Kentucky and Missouri respectively, will lead panel discussions highlighting agritourism activities in their states.

Herb sessions will include topics on “Medicinal Herbs” by Andrea and Matthias Reisen; and “Teas and Herbal Health” by Kay Whitlock. Other herb-related sessions will cover the 2008 Herb of the Year, incredible edible flowers, herbal business development, season-extending herb production techniques, and how to build an herbal website, to name a few. University of Illinois speakers in the herb program include Sandy Mason and Donna Falconnier.

In the cross-cutting sessions that deal with a variety of issues of importance to fruit, vegetable, and herb growers and farm marketers, Charlie Touchette will present a session on competing for markets, and Rich Schell will do his always-popular session on current legal issues for direct farm marketers. This track of programming also includes sessions on invasive pest species, pollinator health, pest monitoring, and improving pesticide application methods. On January 11 the afternoon session is devoted to H-2A and other labor issues; James Holt of Washington, D.C., will be on hand to cover these issues.

### **Cider Contests:**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Cider Contest and the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Hard Cider Contest will again be held in conjunction with the conference. For more information about the cider contests, contact Dr. Elizabeth Wahle, U of I Extension, PH: 618/692-9434; FAX: 618/692-9808; E-mail: [wahle@uiuc.edu](mailto:wahle@uiuc.edu).

**The Market Display Challenge: A competition for up to 10 growers/marketers**

A new twist for the annual program ... appearances DO count, especially for marketing produce, so ISGA is hosting a “market display challenge” on January 10. They will provide a table and fresh produce, and you create an appealing and inviting display. It can include hardware, information pieces, recipes, and whatever else you want. The competition is FREE and open to first 10 respondents who indicate they want to participate. Contact Diane Handley at 309-557-2107 to sign up. **The winner will receive \$100** and be recognized at the banquet on the evening of January 10.

**Buy Local, Eat Healthy:**

Also new to the 2008 conference will be a local foods program entitled “Buy Local - Eat Healthy” on Saturday, January 12, 2008. The program will feature Chef Michael McGreal, Joliet Junior College, who will demonstrate the preparation of delicious and exciting dishes that use fresh produce. Other sessions to be offered by University of Illinois Extension Educators and by Lloyd Nichols of Marengo, IL, will include when to expect specific produce to be available, what produce to use for specific uses, and how to store and handle fresh fruits and vegetables for maximum shelf life, flavor, and nutrition.

We need your assistance ... We want to provide attendees at the Buy Local – Eat Healthy program with an opportunity to meet local growers who supply local markets with fresh produce. Here is an opportunity to promote your business to the consuming public. Complimentary table, signage, registration, and noon luncheon will be provided to growers who set up a tabletop display (if you don't have a tabletop display, business cards, brochures, and other promotional pieces will suffice) which will assist consumers with locating fresh produce grown in their area.

The exhibit area will be open for setting displays from 7:00-8:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 12, 2008. Attendees will have an opportunity to visit with growers from 8-9 a.m. and again during the noon luncheon. To reserve an exhibit space, please complete the form below and return it to Diane Handley, Illinois Specialty Growers Association, 1701 Towanda Ave., Bloomington, IL, 61701 by January 2, 2008.

.....  
**Buy Local – Eat Healthy  
Exhibitor Registration Form  
Saturday, January 12, 2008**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you require electricity (only 110 voltage available)?** Yes or NO (circle one)

**Exact Wording for Your Sign** \_\_\_\_\_  
(one line only – 32 characters including spaces & punctuation)

**NOTE:**

Exhibitor will receive the following complimentary items:

- 8' draped table
- Signage
- Registration
- Noon Luncheon.

Your display may include business cards, brochures, and other promotional pieces. If you have a tabletop display to promote your business, please bring it with you.

**Please return registration form to Diane Handley, Illinois Specialty Growers Association, 1701 Towanda Ave., Bloomington, IL 61701 by January 2, 2008.**

## *Notes from Chris Doll*

The intemperate weather of 2007 in this area included cold, heat and drought that challenged most fruit growers. The Easter freeze of early April will go on record as one that destroyed most of the Southern Illinois fruit crops. It was the shortest peach crop since 1990 and the shortest apple crop since 1955. The heat and drought would have made for difficult growing and harvesting of full crops of these fruits, but it takes all the fortitude and optimism of a fruit grower to look forward to 2008 and another year.

At this time some recent rain and snow, coupled with winter weather, has relieved the drought situation to the point that the Back 40 is only nine inches below normal in precipitation for the year. In spite of all the weather problems, plant growth looks good, and the potential for a strong bloom is good. A fairly warm late fall has allowed some apple leaves to hang longer than normal, and some comments have circulated about Jonathan flower buds being advanced. But horticultural knowledge says that the wood and buds are near or at their deepest rest period, so that we can rest easy until the next Alberta Clipper comes in.

A van-load of nine Illini traveled to the Michigan EXPO early this month, and among other things, were privileged to view the large apple variety display put on by the Michigan State University staff of Bill Shane, Phil Schwallier, and others. There were 14 Fuji sports and 16 Gala sports to study and compare. The harvest dates at their two experimental farms ranged from 22 days for early Fuji to full season Fuji, and two days for all Gala clones. Our group did not reach a consensus on the best. The Honeycrisp shown were much more attractive than what I see in Southern Illinois, but local pride says that ours taste better. The most appealing varieties to my taste buds in this show were Cameo, Candy Crisp, and Sonata (also known as Pinova, Corail or Pinata).

A review of the 1955 Illinois State Horticulture Society Transactions revealed mention of that year's spring freeze and other society reports. The freeze that year was 10 days earlier, and temperatures of 2-10 degrees in early bloom caused crop losses similar to those in 2007. It was also a dry year, with lots of heat, and the apple crop that survived was reported to be small and poorly colored. At that time, Dr. Dwight Powell was testing fall and spring applications of copper sulfate for controlling (reducing) fire blight infections. Variable results between years led to the conclusion that these sprays could reduce the infections but should not suffice for a solitary measure. At the same time, Dr. Victor Kelly was experimenting with NAA for thinning peaches.

1955 was the 100th anniversary of the Hort Society, and a gala banquet was held in commemoration. Good reading and some interesting photos were included for us old-timers. At that time, there was a proposal to charge a \$1.00 registration fee for attending the annual meeting. And my old professor R. L. McMunn philosophized about the poor crop year and the fruit industry as follows, "A dyed-in-the-wool horticulturalist never grows old – he ages, and can always see beauty in plants."

*Chris Doll*

## ***Vegetable Production and Pest Management***

### ***Effects of seeding rates of rye cover crop on pumpkin yield:***

A trial was carried out in 2007 in northern Illinois to assess the effects of different seeding rates of grain rye, plastic mulch, and nitrogen fertilizer application rates on pumpkin yield. Rye was seeded the previous fall (in 2006) at the rates of 90 lbs/acre and 120 lbs/acre. Rye seeded at 90 lbs/acre and 120 lbs/acre did not affect the fruit number, weight, and fruit size of 'Howden' and 'Magic Lantern' pumpkin varieties when compared to bare ground. Plastic mulch and nitrogen fertilizer application rates of 45 and 90 lbs N per acre did not affect the yields or fruit size in either variety.

Rye mulch between rows suppressed weeds, and there was no significant difference in biomass of red root pigweed, black nightshade, common lambsquarter, velvet leaf, and grass weeds in plots where rye was seeded at 90 lbs/acre and 120 lbs/acre. Fruit rot was more prevalent on pumpkin grown on bare ground than in strip-tilled plots, with more incidences on plots where water remained standing for a long period of time after the extended period of heavy rains in the third week of August.

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