

# Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News

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**Editors: Nathan Johanning & 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 Johanning, 618-939-3434, <a href="mailto:njohann@illinois.edu">njohann@illinois.edu</a> or Bronwyn Aly 618-695-2441, <a href="mailto:baly@illinois.edu">baly@illinois.edu</a>. The *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is available on the web at: <a href="http://ipm.illinois.edu/ifvn/">http://ipm.illinois.edu/ifvn/</a>. To receive or be removed from email notification of new postings of this newsletter, contact Nathan Johanning or Bronwyn Aly at the phone numbers or email addresses above.

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# **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.

• 2022 University of Illinois Extension Small Farms Winter Webinar Series. This free weekly Zoom series, held on Thursdays from noon-1 pm, covers topics relevant for new and established farmers throughout Illinois. Each week, a topic will be presented that will help you adopt new practices, start growing a new crop, get started in livestock, and find out about impactful University of Illinois research. To register and for more information, please visit go.illinois.edu/smfarmswebinarseries

January 27, 2022	Regenerative Agriculture	Kacie Athey
February 3, 2022	Vining Through Pumpkin Production	Nathan Johanning
February 10, 2022	Illinois Home to Market Law	Mary Liz Wright
February 17, 2022	Pawpaws: Our Native 'Tropical' Fruit	Doug Gucker
February 24, 2022	High Tunnel Winter Greens Research	Bronwyn Aly
March 3, 2022	Introduction to Vermicomposting	Crystal Stevens
March 10, 2022	Mushroom Production	Michael Hatfield
March 17, 2022	Getting Started with Backyard Swine	Katie Bell
March 24, 2022	Growing Great Grapes	Grant McCarty

- Southwest Illinois Commercial Tree Fruit School, Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 8 am-3:30 pm, Knights of Columbus Hall in Hardin, IL. For more information or to register for this in-person learning opportunity visit go.illinois.edu/TreeFruitSchool or contact Ken Johnson at 217-243-7424 or kiohnso@illlinois.edu
- Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School, Wednesday, February 9, 2022, 8 am-4 pm, DoubleTree by Hilton, Mt. Vernon, IL. This annual school will be held in-person and offer tracks in tree fruit, vegetable, small fruit, and cut flower production. For more information or to register for this program visit go.illinois.edu/2022Fruit-VegSchool or contact Elizabeth Wahle at 618-344-4230 or wahle@illinois.edu
- Introduction to Fruit Tree Pruning Webinar, Friday, February 11, 2022, from 3-5 pm via Zoom. Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator, Grant McCarty, will be delivering this webinar geared toward new tree fruit growers and beginning farmers. For more information or to register visit, <a href="https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=24795">https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=24795</a>
- Backyard Maple Syrup Workshop, Saturday, February 19, 2022 from 10-11:30 am, University of Illinois Dixon Springs Ag Center, 354 State Highway 145 N, Simpson, IL 62985. For more information see below in News and Announcements or contact Extension Forester, Chris Evans, at 618-695-3383.
- 2022 North American Raspberry & Blackberry Conference, February 21-24, 2022, DoubleTree by
  Hilton Washington DC North/Gaithersburg, 620 Perry Parkway, Gaithersburg, MD 20877. For more
  details about this hybrid (in-person and virtual) conference, visit
  https://www.raspberryblackberry.com/2022-north-american-raspberry-blackberry-conference/
- 33rd Annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Feb. 24-26, 2022, in La Crosse, Wis. The event brings together farmers, researchers, and agriculture professionals to learn the latest organic production practices and build a supportive community of resilient organic, sustainable, and regenerative farms. See <a href="mailto:mosesorganic.org/conference">mosesorganic.org/conference</a> for registration information, workshop descriptions, and more details. To request more information about the conference or a mail-in registration form, call 888-90-MOSES.
- Annie's Project Training Program, 6 weekly sessions starting February 24, 2022, Jackson County Extension Office, Murphysboro, IL. Annie's Project brings women together to learn from experts in production, financial management, human resources, marketing, and the legal field. The program covers many topics dedicated to strengthening women's roles in modern farm and ranch enterprises, including business plans, crop insurance, diversifying farm operations, estate planning, farm appraisal, and much more. Interested participants can learn more or register at <a href="mailto:go.illinois.edu/anniesproject2022">go.illinois.edu/anniesproject2022</a> or by contacting Katie Bell at 618-687-1727 or <a href="mailto:klbell@illinois.edu">klbell@illinois.edu</a>

#### News & Announcements

#### FDA's New Proposed Water Rule

On Dec 2nd, 2022 the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) released the proposed revisions to Subpart E - Agricultural Water for the FMSA Produce Safety Rule (PSR). The proposed rule is titled, "Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption Relating to Agricultural Water."

If you have attended a FSMA training in the past, you have learned about the previous rules for the use of agricultural water. After a long process of revision from the FDA, the agricultural water rule is now ready for comment from the public. Their proposal would rely on a water risk assessment to make judgements about how water could and should be used on farms. Read more about the <u>proposed revisions in this factsheet</u> from the FDA. Even if your farm might not be covered by the FSMA PSR, all farms are still responsible for the safe growing, harvesting, and holding of fresh produce and should consider the sanitary quality of the water that they use. Why? Because both pre- and post-harvest water has been linked with many produce-related, foodborne outbreaks and recalls.

The FDA is seeking comments on the proposed ag water rule from growers and others who are impacted by the proposed rule. <u>Electronic or written comments</u> must be submitted on the proposed rule by April 5, 2022. <u>Two virtual public meetings</u> will be held by FDA to discuss the proposed rule and to make comments.

Doug Gucker (217-877-6042; <a href="mailto:dgucker@illinois.edu">dgucker@illinois.edu</a>)

#### **Small Farms Winter Webinar Series 2022**

Each winter, the Local Foods and Small Farms Team assembles a weekly webinar series that covers topics that are timely and relevant for Illinois specialty growers, beginning farmers, and others involved in the local food system. Starting Thursday, January 20 at 12-1PM, join us for the kick-off of this 10 week series. This year's topics include agroforestry, pumpkin production, regenerative agriculture, high tunnel research, pawpaws, vermicomposting, grapes, Cottage Food Law updates, among many others.

"What I like about this series is that it allows us to reach wider audiences throughout Illinois and the Midwest to connect growers with resources, University of Illinois research, and the work of our team of educators and specialists" states Grant McCarty, Local Foods and Small Farms Educator (Jo Daviess, Stephenson, and Winnebago counties). "It means that one of my growers in Rockford is connecting with relevant research from Dixon Springs that they may not have been able to find out about otherwise"

To register for this free series, please visit go.illinois.edu/smfarmswebinarseries

Grant McCarty (815-235-4125; gmccarty@illinois.edu)

## Be Part Of The Future Of Farming, Take The Illinois Agriculture Needs Survey

URBANA, Ill. – Farming is changing. It's hard for everyone, small farmers and commercial producers alike, to keep up with the latest research, changing climates, emerging pesticide resistance, new crop varieties all while trying to stay healthy and productive.

For more than 100 years, <u>University of Illinois Extension</u> has worked with agricultural communities to empower them to meet challenges with confidence. Now, you can be part of the future of farming in Illinois by taking a few minutes to share your thoughts with Extension researchers online at <u>go.illinois.edu/AgNeeds</u>. "This survey will help us get an accurate picture of what our agriculture stakeholders' needs are," says <u>Katie Bell</u>, Illinois Extension local foods small farms educator. This survey is designed to gain feedback from specialty crop farmers as well as those with row crops and livestock.

Extension agriculture educators regularly ask those working in the agricultural industry about their concerns and use the feedback to develop trainings for the public on new and emerging topics and develop research projects that address gaps in current understanding of crop sciences.

"Knowing what our farm communities are thinking about helps us prioritize what research projects our scientists can focus their efforts on so we can then share accurate information that our stakeholders can trust," Bell says.

The survey is anonymous and open to all Illinois producers, and agriculture industry professionals now through March 2022. It will take 10 to 20 minutes to complete.

For more information about the survey, contact Katie Bell at (618) 687-1727 or klbell@illinois.edu.

### **Backyard Maple Syrup Production Workshop**

Are you interested in learning about making your own maple syrup? If so, come to the sixth annual Backyard Maple Syrup Production Workshop at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center. Maple sap collection and syrup production is easy, relatively inexpensive to start, and is a great late winter project that can be fun for the entire family. Sugar maples, the species typically thought of for sap collection, are abundant in southern Illinois but other species of maple can also be tapped to make this tasty syrup.

This all-outdoor program will cover tree identification, equipment needs, tree tapping, sap collection, boiling, and finishing maple syrup. Participants will see firsthand the processes involved in making maple syrup. We will have a demonstration of a syrup evaporator and an optional tour of a sugarbush forest, managed for maple syrup production and utilizing a pipeline system of sap collection.

The University of Illinois Extension will provide an indoor maple syrup program for kids (Masks will be required indoors).

The workshop will be held on Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from 10 am-11:30 am at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center, located at 354 State Highway 145 N, Simpson, IL 62985. This program is free and open to the public.

Register by calling the Ag Center at 618-695-3383 or emailing cwevans@illinois.edu by February 18th

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Dixon Springs at 618-695-3383.

For more information, please contact:

Chris Evans (618-695-3383; cwevans@illinois.edu)

### **Orchard Hill Farm Claims Top Honors At The 2022 Illinois Sweet Cider Contests**

The Illinois State Horticulture Society sponsored its 32nd Illinois and National Sweet Cider Contests and the 19th National Hard Cider Contest, held in conjunction with the Illinois Specialty Growers Association Specialty Crop Conference on January 6 in Springfield.

Wes Carruthers of Orchard Hill Farm in Lewiston produced the No. 1 overall rated cider at this year's contest, winning both the National and Illinois contests. Second Place National Cider and Second Place Illinois Cider went to Patrick Riofredo and Victor Rios of Curran's Orchard in Rockford. Third Place National Cider and Third Place Illinois Cider went to Justin Wiles and Trevor Grissom of Wiles Family Orchard in Fairfield. Midwest Cider of Merit 1st Runner-up was awarded to Mike and Jenna Spychal of Jonamac Orchard in Malta. Midwest Cider of Merit 2nd Runner-up went to Greg Durdan of Big Bear Orchard in Grand Ridge, and the Midwest Cider of Merit 3rd Runner-up went to Brian Edwards of Edwards Apple Orchard West in Winnebago.

This year, Justin Wiles and Trevor Grissom of Wiles Family Orchard of Fairfield also claimed the Champion Hard Cider.

Thanks are extended to all who entered the contest this year. Start planning now for the next contest in 2023.

## One Month Remaining To Apply For The Resilience Fund

Are you or do you know a local food producer who could use up to \$10,000 to make improvements to infrastructure on their Illinois farm?

Illinois Stewardship Alliance's <u>Resilience Fund</u> provides local food farmers with grant funding for investment in critical infrastructure to scale and adapt their businesses to improve the capacity and resilience of the local food system.

Last year, the Resilience Fund awarded grants to 27 local farms to invest in on-farm infrastructure, including cold storage, hoop houses, irrigation systems, and more.

For Kacey Nelson of Two Million Blooms in Urbana, converting an old garage into a honey house was always a farflung goal.

Thanks to the Resilience Fund, she told us, "We now have a dedicated, on-farm structure in which to house and grow the sticky business of providing quality honey to the local community.

With financial support from the <u>Chicago Region Food System Fund</u>, \$175,000 will be awarded to local food producers for investment in critical infrastructure to increase the capacity and resilience in the local food system.

Grant applications will be reviewed by a committee of local agriculture and food specialists. Applications to the Resilience Fund are due on February 15, 2022.

The application and information regarding eligibility, funding priorities, and previously awarded projects can be found at www.ilstewards.org/resilience

Questions about the Resilience Fund can be directed to Garrett at garrett@ilstewards.org.

#### Apply Now

# Regional Reports

<u>From northwestern Illinois</u>... It was great to see many of our Northern growers at last week's Specialty Growers Conference in Springfield. In the New Farmer track, I had conversations with growers that were gearing up for the season with new fruit trees to plant, changes to their organic matter management, discussions on day-neutral strawberries, and developing their marketing plan for this year.

Snow coverage has declined in parts of our region. While we avoided the very large storm this past weekend, we are still experiencing similar cold temperatures that we fully expect this time of year. This week (1/17) will bring colder temperatures. Most growers are beginning to plan their pruning work this upcoming month and for those who attended Specialty Growers Conference last week, I highly recommend revisiting Dr. Peter Hirst's presentations.

For new fruit tree growers and beginning farmers, I am delivering a Zoom webinar, Intro to Fruit Tree Pruning, on Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup> from 3-5PM. Since 2017, I have delivered in-person and webinar based fruit tree pruning classes (apple, pear, stone) that use a color-coded system to help participants determine steps they need to take for pruning by incorporating photos of participants in the presentation. More information and to register can be found <a href="https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=24795">https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=24795</a>.

Grant McCarty (815-235-4125; gmccarty@illinois.edu)

St. Louis metro east...Registration is now open for the Commercial Tree Fruit School scheduled February 8 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Hardin II at <a href="mailto:go.illinois.edu/TreeFruitSchool">go.illinois.edu/TreeFruitSchool</a>. Registration is also open for the Southern IL Fruit and Vegetable School scheduled for February 9 at the DoubleTree in Mt Vernon at <a href="go.illinois.edu/2022Fruit-VegSchool">go.illinois.edu/2022Fruit-VegSchool</a>. Just as a reminder for those attending, the state of Illinois is as of this writing still under a mask mandate where all individuals in Illinois who are age two or over and able to medically tolerate a face covering (a mask or cloth face covering) shall be required to cover their nose and mouth with a face covering when in an indoor public place.

The Network for Environment and Weather Applications (NEWA) is a partnership of land grant universities and grower associations. Growers can get more information about buying a weather station for their farm and connecting to NEWA at <a href="https://newa.cornell.edu/become-partner/">https://newa.cornell.edu/become-partner/</a>. Please save Monday, Feb 7 for the Cornell Cooperative Extension Regional Fruit Teams hosting a NEWA 3.0 online training for apple disease and insect models at <a href="https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/newa">https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/newa</a> 3.0 tutorial flyer.pdf.

Check your IL Pesticide Applicators License to make sure you know when it expires! If your license expired at the end of last year, you need to retest in order to purchase or use restricted use pesticides (RUP). Testing with the IL Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is available in person or proctored online. The UI Extension Pesticide Education Program (PSEP) is available for the most common categories as a self-paced online training course. Testing is separate from the online training, so you must sign up individually for testing. The one-stop web page to sign up for training and/or testing is <a href="https://extension.illinois.edu/psep/training-and-testing">https://extension.illinois.edu/psep/training-and-testing</a> In-person testing-only sites are filling up fast, so don't delay.

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

<u>From southwestern Illinois (Waterloo)...</u> Overall 2021 ended fairly mild, however, we have been more in a winter like in general in 2022 so far. The coldest temperatures I have seen here have been around 4 degrees in mid-January for a morning low. Overall temperatures have been what I would feel to be fairly average for this time of year. We have had a few periods of below freezing days but then followed by some periods with more mild winter temperatures, with some highs in the 40s, maybe even 50s. We have had just a small amount of snow last week but mostly have been fairly dry recently.

Tree fruit and small fruit pruning is underway. I did a "final" harvest of my fall planting of cauliflower and broccoli (side shoots) on New Years Eve. I stowed many nice heads of cauliflower in the refrigerator and we still are enjoying some of them. I did have some sweet turnips, lettuce, and spinach outside under just a row cover low tunnel and all but the spinach was taken out by the down to single digit temperatures the first part of January.

Cover crops are still doing well despite the cold. November planted cereal rye is small but established well. Spring oats and crimson clover planted early September showing the typical injury from the cold. The oats have about succumb to the cold; however the clover is doing very well. It had a lot of growth from the warm fall so many of the older leaves are brown from the cold but the crown of the plant is still very green, robust and healthy. This cover has this soil held in place and building the soil and hopefully producing some nitrogen as well.





November broadcast planted cereal rye (left) and early September planted oats and crimson clover as of mid-January. Photos: N. Johanning

Thanks to all that joined us at the Illinois Specialty Crops Conference, especially the Pumpkin workshop. Remember for those that registered for the conference, recordings of all presentations are available through the <a href="https://www.specialtygrowers.org">www.specialtygrowers.org</a>

Also please take a moment to take the Agriculture Needs survey for Extension at <u>go.illinois.edu/AgNeeds</u>. This feed back is VERY important to see and justify the needs of all of our agriculture community, especially specialty crops. Your feed back helps us continue to provide resources like this newsletter and improve it to better help you!

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

From southern Illinois (Murphysboro)... Even though its only January, I am already getting excited about spring planting. Here at the Jackson county office we are currently in a holding pattern with our outside growing activities. We are managing the plants that we have growing in the high-tunnel and making plans for the spring. The recent dip in temperatures has us paying extra attention to the forecast and putting on row covers when we need to. Now is the time to look at the records from last year and make a plan for the 2022 growing season. I am pouring over seed catalogs and trying not to let my ambitions get the best of me!

We couldn't wait any longer to start growing plants, so we set up a small growing station in the basement. We are starting petunias, geraniums, and other flowers for a hanging basket workshop in April. The first seedlings have sprouted, and the main challenge so far has been providing them enough moisture.

Happy spring planning and stay warm!

Photo by K. Bell.

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



<u>From Dixon Springs Ag Center...</u>It was really nice to see so many familiar masked faces in Springfield during the Illinois Specialty Crop Conference earlier this month. I may be biased but I felt like there was a good diversity of topics covered in the different pre-conference workshops and program tracks throughout the conference.

With no crops growing in the tunnels during this winter season, we have been focusing on plans for spring and summer trials and demonstration plots. Seed catalog pages are dog-eared, and while it is challenging to stay focused on filling the needs of the season plans we have created, it is important to stick with the plan and not over commit resources and time by ordering and planting more than can be successfully managed.

Maintenance is needed on all of the tunnels, ranging from replacing the skin and a fixed side wall curtain that were severly damaged in a high wind event to changing out the side curtain mechanisms that no longer function properly. We are also using this down time with no crops growing to amend the soil in our permanent raised beds with compost. The soil level in most of the beds has settled out and additional soil is needed to have full 6" tall beds.

Don't miss out on the multiple programming opportunities being offered across the state and online over the next couple of months. Also, if you haven't taken the Ag Needs Survey, please carve out 15-20 minutes to fill out the survey at go.illinois.edu/AgNeeds and help guide the focus of future Extension programming and research.

Bronwyn Aly (618-695-2441; baly@illinois.edu)

## Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management

#### **Pumpkin Variety Selection Resources**

As many are probably making final decisions on pumpkin varieties, I wanted to share a reminder of some resources available:

2020 Pumpkin Variety Trial Videos from research trials at the Belleville Research Center:

2020 Pumpkin Variety Trial - Medium Jack-O'-Lanterns - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V79jdY07CPI&t=96s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V79jdY07CPI&t=96s</a>

2020 Pumpkin Variety Trial - Large Jack-O'-Lanterns https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmVBXDz9s8g&t=34s

2020 Pumpkin Variety Trial - Specialty Pumpkins <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YLmUx20fws&t=1s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YLmUx20fws&t=1s</a>

Midwest Vegetable Variety Trial Reports

These trial reports are a great resource for trial across the Midwest from other researchers. Feel free to review all of the trials at <a href="https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/mwvtr/">https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/mwvtr/</a>. Below are links to 2 specific trial reports I have contributed on pumpkin varieties.

2018 Pumpkin Variety Trial Report <a href="https://ag.purdue.edu/hla/fruitveg/MidWest%20Trial%20Reports/2018/Johanning">https://ag.purdue.edu/hla/fruitveg/MidWest%20Trial%20Reports/2018/Johanning</a> Pumpkin 2018.pdf

2020 Pumpkin Variety Trial Report <a href="https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/mwvtr/34/">https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/mwvtr/34/</a>

#### Ohio Virtual Pumpkin trial tours

Jim Jasinski from The Ohio State University a whole suite of pumpkin variety resources from trial work they do which is also very useful for us in Illinois. Visit <a href="https://u.osu.edu/jasinski.4/pumpkins/">https://u.osu.edu/jasinski.4/pumpkins/</a> to explore the virtual trial tours, recordings and other resources.

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

# Less Seriously...

A local radio station plays a game called, "What's in my pocket?" in which they provide clues throughout the day and listeners call in with their guesses, and of course the winner gets whatever prize the station is giving away that day. I am thinking we should try that this month. I will provide a few clues as to what might be "in my pocket" and everyone that wants to play can send me an email with your guess. Next issue I will reveal the mystery item and the winner of the guessing game. And the prize? well that is just the satisfaction of knowing you were the best guesser in all the IFVN land. Send your guesses to <a href="mailto:baly@illinois.edu">baly@illinois.edu</a> Here are your clues:

- 1. I can come in various shapes and sizes.
- 2. I don't like being crusty and rusty.
- 3. I am a cut above the rest.

## 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	618-695-2441	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	
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DOUG GUCKER, DeWitt, Macon, & Piatt counties	217-877-6042	dgucker@illinois.edu	
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ANDREW HOLSINGER, Christian, Jersey, Macoupin, & Montgomery counties	217-532-3941	aholsing@illinois.edu	
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NATHAN JOHANNING, Madison, Monroe, & St. Clair counties	618-939-3434	njohann@illinois.edu	
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