

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER—DECEMBER 2020

ENYCHP Films Virtual Farm Stand Tours

Elisabeth Hodgdon, Vegetable Specialist

Visiting other farm stands around the region and beyond is an important step many agricultural producers take when planning for their own farm store construction or renovation. Observing farm stand layouts, product availability, store construction and design, and marketing is essential research during the process. Due to the 2020 pandemic, many producers were limited in travel. In lieu of an in-person farm stand tour, ENYCHP specialists filmed a series of four videos in the fall highlighting farm stands and markets around the Eastern NY region. The videos feature grower and store manager advice and testimonials, as well as footage of stores and farms. Research technicians exercised their videography skills to polish final videos that will be aired at the ENYCHP Winter Meeting in February. Participants during the live tour program will view the virtual tours from the comfort of their own homes, and will have an opportunity to interact with the grower panel during a Q&A session.



Jori Wekin (left) of Hub on the Hill tells ENYCHP specialist Elisabeth Hodgdon about the services the Hub provides to assist growers with packing and transforming their products for their own store and for wholesale. Photo: Andy Galimberti

Reconnecting with Purpose

Laura McDermott, Berry Specialist

As farm and food system educators or change agents working alongside rural and urban farm communities, we face enormous challenges to our efforts to support improved livelihoods of those we serve. While we may design focused educational programs or convene groups to work towards change, our work can become daunting. Over time, we may find our energy, commitment and spirit depleted.

This fall Laura joined this five month, virtual retreat sponsored by Cornell Small Farms is aimed directly at NY farm and food system educators and change makers. It has allowed an opportunity to step away from day-to-day work to pause, reflect, replenish and connect with a larger community of others doing similar work. The program aims to create a welcoming and trustworthy space for farm and food system educators to explore challenges, to re-engage with personal strengths and capacities to address them, and to renew a sense of inspiration and purpose in their work and lives.

At this writing the program is at the halfway point. Despite the last minute adjustment to a virtual format, it's still been a great way to meet people outside of the CCE system that are still involved in farm and food education. Some skills learned thus far include 'The Circle of Trust' approach to working with teams; some great interactive strategies for virtual meetings and lastly just an opportunity to remember why the work is so important.

For more information on this project, please visit the [Cornell Small Farms website](https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/).



Tree Fruit Winter Meeting Regional Collaborations

Mike Basedow, Tree Fruit Specialist



Due to continued COVID-19 restrictions, our usual winter tree fruit extension programming is unable to include live, in-person events. Instead, Eastern New York tree fruit specialists have developed a number of sessions for an online virtual meeting, scheduled to take place Feb 2-4 2021. This meeting is being held in collaboration with the Lake Ontario Fruit Program, in an effort to reach not only reach fruit growers in the Eastern New York region, but fruit growers across the state and greater Northeast. In addition to hosting a live webinar for the twelve sessions, growers who sign up will also have access to a Teachable course page, which is an online course hosting platform. At this site, growers will be able to view supplementary educational materials from the speakers, and will be able to access a "virtual trade show", to view online materials from our various speaker sponsors.

In addition to the Cornell NYS Winter Tree Fruit Conference, we have also been working closely with our New England colleagues to develop an online winter fruit seminar series. These events kicked off in November, and will continue through March. ENY specialists have been working to get DEC recertification for many of these events, in an effort to provide additional opportunities to get these much needed recertification credits to the fruit growers of Eastern New York.

The conference website can be found at: <http://blogs.cornell.edu/nystreefruitconference/>

Continued Vineyard Growth in the Hudson Valley

James Meyers, Viticulture Specialist

The fourth quarter of 2020 saw continued interest in new vineyard planting in the Hudson Valley. During the quarter, ENYCHP advised on many new plantings including site evaluation for five potentially new growers. The potential new plantings would be a mix of *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrids and cover approximately 50 total acres.

Fall 2020 Field Research Wrap Up

Chuck Bornt, Vegetable Specialist

After a long, hot dry summer, October brought with it the culmination of several trials that had reached maturity and were ready to harvest. The first trials harvested were are sweet potatoes that were conducted in two locations: Morgiewicz Produce in Orange County and Samascott Orchards in Columbia County. The Morgiewicz trial evaluated 9 different varieties and our Samascott trial evaluated the same 9 varieties, but also a slip production trial and a slip quality trial. Plots were harvested in early October and graded later in the month. Information on these trials will be shared with interested growers on February 17, 2021 during our Vegetable and Small Fruit Winter Webinar Series, via our website with a full powerpoint presentation program enrollees can visit and a newsletter article in the Produce Pages.

In mid-October we harvested our Irish potato variety trial which was also located at Samascott Orchards in Columbia County. Here, we evaluated 32 potato varieties ranging from red skin with yellow flesh to purple skin with purple flesh and nearly every other color combination, shape and size you can think of. This trial continues to gain support from breeders across the county with entries from Michigan State University, University of Maine, Cornell University and highly renowned seed potato grower from NY, Ralph Childs or Childstock Farm located in Malone, NY. Although there were a number of exciting varieties, one of the most exciting was the purchased of a used potato grader that was used for the first time this year. This grader improved our grading efficiency from what would normally take us 10-14 days to 3 days! This information was shared with growers on December 9, 2020 through our “Variety Trial Round-Up” webinar where we discussed the results of not only this trial, but our other variety trials including seedless watermelon, beefsteak tomatoes, peas and leeks as well as broccoli trials from our colleague Sandy Menasha from CCE Suffolk County.



Top to bottom: CCE ENYCHP team members hard at work harvesting potatoes. Our ‘new’ potato grader all set up and ready to go! Covington continues to be one of the top producing sweet potato varieties we can grow here in update NY. Chuck and Laura digging in and harvesting sweet potatoes.

Late Season Field Research

Teresa Rusinek, Vegetable Specialist

Vegetable specialists Teresa Rusinek and Ethan Grundberg are developing integrated pest management strategies including the use of exclusion netting or row cover to reduce damage from the invasive Allium Leafminer. Because the second generation of Allium Leafminer is active well into October, data was collected and analyzed through November at a research trial hosted at an Ulster County farm. After field work has been completed, this time of the year is often focused on reporting outcomes to funders, providing outreach to growers and preparing grant projects for the upcoming season.



Technician Sarah Tobin evaluates plot treatments at Fall ALM leek trial.

Updated Tree Fruit Alerts

Daniel J. Donahue, Tree Fruit Specialist

ENYCHP Tree Fruit specialists and technicians implemented a revised, updated, and improved version of our popular periodic email message, the ENYCHP Tree Fruit E-Alert in October 2020. Our original E-Alert format was based on a simple text presentation of immediately actionable information. Our goal was to keep the presentations brief and rely on internet links for background information. Green, yellow, and red color coding was introduced as a means of alerting the grower to articles of critical importance and timeliness. While the format allowed for rapid and uncomplicated editing and dissemination, there were limitations. File size restrictions limited the use of graphics and photographs. Distribution and impact metrics were impossible to ascertain. To solve these issues and modernize E-Alert presentation, we moved our production over to the Constant Contact platform. Tree Fruit E-Alerts now appear more professional, we can incorporate graphics, and metrics such as “opens” and “click-throughs” are now available. It is even possible to see who is opening the E-Alert! In the future we will be able to analyze the data and implement improvements to our content and format with the goal of increasing impact.

October-December 2020

235 Phone Consults

322 E-mail Consults

100 Farm Visits

21 Webinars/Distance Learning

442 Participants in Distance Learning

Daily, personalized, farm-specific vineyard report addressing weather and pests—delivered to **191** growers for a total of **16,044** unique reports



The Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the CCE associations in Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Dutchess, Essex, Fulton, Greene, Orange, Montgomery, Putnam, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schoharie, Ulster, Warren, & Washington.

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