

# Cornell Cooperative Extension

## Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program

# QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY—MARCH 2021

## Uncommon Fruit Workshop Series Reveals Wide Ranging Interest

*Laura McDermott, Berry Specialist*



During our 2021 virtual winter conference, one of the offerings was a 4-part workshop series on uncommon fruit. These 2 hour long sessions focused on fruit that was worthy of commercialization, but also on bringing together a community of people that are willing to do the necessary work to bring these non-traditional crops to market. This often means that growers need to work together to find plant sources, to understand cultural requirements and to create value in a crop that consumers don't know anything about.

Working with growers and CCE educators Erik Schellenberg and Roger Ort, along with former CCE educator Steven McKay, we were able to provide a wide variety of information to perspective farmers. Attendance numbered 117 and most were in attendance for all four days.

Some of the plants we covered include Aronia, Haskap, Amelanchier, Ribes, Elderberry to name just a few. These fruit crops are universally high in antioxidants, low in sugar and high in fiber. They are considered to be 'nutraceuticals' by many in the food industry and are highly valued by certain cultures. And all of them can be grown in upstate NY where there is a relatively low pest presence and access to a huge and diverse consumer population in the metro NY region.

We often hear about 'emerging crops' in terms of crops like hops, hemp and cannabis, but these uncommon fruit crops would be much easier to commercialize since the post-harvest production chain would be very similar to our existing crops. For more information about accessing the recorded sessions and the supporting information, please contact [lgm4@cornell.edu](mailto:lgm4@cornell.edu).





## Collaborative Online Tree Fruit Programming to Bring Additional Resources to ENY Orchards

### Mike Basedow, Tree Fruit Specialist

Throughout the winter months, we worked closely with our tree fruit extension colleagues across the northeast region to deliver online educational for tree fruit producers. This collaboration was facilitated to combine our efforts to offer more programming to stakeholders throughout the Northeast, and to reduce the potential for overlap in presentations. Meetings were held on a nearly weekly basis from late January through the end of March, on a variety of fruit topics. The full list can be found in the table below. While the six New England states offer reciprocity with pesticide credits, the New York DEC does not recognize New England credits. To allow New York growers to receive DEC credits for these meetings, we submitted each program to the NYSDEC, using their online meeting course approval credentials that were developed in the spring of 2020. Through these efforts, we were able to offer 11 additional DEC recertification credits to NYS growers.

In the table below, you can see the full list of the topics presented on, the number of attendees at each meeting, and the number of DEC credits we offered at each meeting.

We look forward to future close collaborations with our New England colleagues.

Northeast Winter Fruit Seminar Series				
Date	Topic	Total Attendees	NY Attendees	Credits
11-Nov	Peach Bacterial Disease Management	109	10	1
19-Jan	Keeping Peach Trees Healthy	163	50	1
26-Jan	Blueberry Twig Diseases	101	23	1
9-Feb	Cider apples: Where do we stand?	147	59	1
16-Feb	Invasive Insect Pests	124	35	1
3-Mar	Managing Apple Maggot Fly	188	41	1
10-Mar	Managing Early Season Apple Insect Pests	193	54	1.25
17-Mar	Honeycrisp Bitter Pit, Scald, and Ag Radar	147	34	1.25
23-Mar	Tree Row Volume	98	25	1.25
30-Mar	NEWA 3.0	117	56	1.25

## 2021 Virtual Tree Fruit Conference

### Daniel J. Donahue, Tree Fruit Specialist

Cornell Cooperative Extension Winter Tree Fruit Schools have been held at locations around New York State for decades and remain among our most popular educational events. In-person attendance at our three pre-Covid 2020 schools totaled over 550. Covid-19 restrictions on large in-person gatherings prevented the two regional extension teams with tree fruit responsibilities, ENYCHP and LOF, from holding traditional winter schools in 2021. CCE Regional Specialists from the two teams worked together to reimagine a statewide on-line event that would provide an exceptional and safe educational experience for members of the tree fruit industry in NYS and beyond. The six specialists and three technical assistants across NYS worked together to organize a three-day virtual tree fruit conference offering 12 educational tracks and 5.25 NYSDEC pesticide recertification credits. Our presenters included 22 associated with Cornell University, Nine NYS growers in two panels and eleven outside speakers, eight of which were from outside New York State. A total of 28 industry vendors and organizations provided financial support for our event. In the end, 431 students registered for the conference, with approximate daily attendance of 340 on Day 1, 230 on Day 2, and 120 on Day 3. Our post-conference survey indicated a high level of attendee satisfaction with the program and online organization of the conference. Attendees suggested a “hybrid” format for future winter fruit schools, combining in-person and online presentations.

## New CCE Certificate Program for Farm Managers

### Elizabeth Higgins, Business Specialist

After months of preparation, CCE’s Ag Workforce Development Program has launched a new CCE certificate program *Agricultural Supervisory Leadership* to train farm managers in employee management and leadership. The program consists of six courses, each consisting of six weeks of instruction. Those who complete all six courses and achieve 70 percent or better on all weekly quizzes will receive an Agricultural Supervisory Leadership certificate. The Agricultural Supervisory Leadership certificate helps farm supervisors and managers learn and apply human resource management practices and leadership skills that foster rewarding workplaces and drive business results. The courses within the certificate program will offer extensive practice and engagement activities to build confidence and skill sets.

Elizabeth Higgins, of the ENYCH team is working with the Cornell Ag Workforce Program on curricula development and is serving as one of the instructors in the new program. The first course *Transition to Supervisor* started on February 4 and was capped at 30 participants. Because of demand, a second section of the program was offered starting March 19 and has an additional 20 students. The second course *Organizing Work for High Quality Results* will start on June 18. The other courses in the program include: Managing Performance, Ethics and Employment Regulations for Supervisors, Becoming an Effective Trainer, and Staffing and Organizing Your Team. There has been good interest from farms in the ENYCH region in the program and many farms are sending several managers to the program.

## ENYCHP Specialists Provide Virtual Food Safety Learning Opportunities During Pandemic

*Elisabeth Hodgdon, Vegetable Specialist*



As part of the virtual Eastern NY Fruit and Vegetable Conference and several other standalone online trainings this winter, participants from around the region and beyond had the opportunity to participate in food safety learning opportunities with ENYCHP specialists and collaborators. The Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training Course, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) training, and special topics webinars allowed growers to receive required training and learn more about how to improve food safety on the farm from the comfort and safety of their own homes. The virtual format allowed Eastern NY growers and specialists the benefit of learning from experts from around the state and country.

Prior to the start of the pandemic, growers subject to federal food safety regulations were required to take an in-person Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course. Since last spring, remote delivery of the PSA Grower Training Course has been permitted, enabling attendees to receive their required training without travel. ENYCHP specialists Elisabeth Hodgdon, Mike Basedow, Laura McDermott, and Crystal Stewart-Courtens worked with the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets to deliver a PSA Grower Training Course in February. Participants enjoyed having the course spread out over three days, remarking that it allowed them to better digest the course material without having to worry about travel and winter snowstorms.

In addition to the PSA Grower Training Course, ENYCHP hosted an in-depth virtual Listeria prevention workshop for apple packinghouses, a webinar on food safety best practices for pick-your-own fruit farms, a postharvest cleaning and sanitizing workshop, and collaborated with colleagues in Western NY to offer a GAPs training. These virtual events hosted specialists from around the state, as well as expert speakers from Vermont and Nebraska. Speakers leveraged break out room and another Zoom features to engage participants with interactive activities that enabled farms to write their own farm food safety plans, develop standard operating procedures, and identify risks on their farms to prepare for the upcoming growing season.

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## Online Vegetable Production and Business Management

*Teresa Rusinek, Vegetable Specialist*

Vegetable production and business management topics were highlighted through a series of online courses ENYCHP specialists developed and offered throughout February. Vegetable production topics included: sweet potato, sweet corn and vegetable transplant production. Guest speakers Dr. Thomas Kuhar of Virginia Polytechnic Institute discussed recent sweet corn insect management programs to reduce insecticide resistance and Max Morningstar and Maria Zordan of Morningstar Farms in Columbia county shared their experiences growing and marketing sweet potatoes. ENYCHP specialist Chuck Bornt presented results from sweet potato variety and slip production trials and Teresa Rusinek covered some of the most common production issues during spring veg production and provided recommendations for insect and disease management. A "Virtual Farm Stand Tour" included a panel of four ENY farm store owner/operators who discussed their stores, products and how they adapted their business in response to the covid pandemic.





## NOFA Sessions attracted large audience from region and beyond

### *Crystal Stewart Courtons, Vegetable Specialist*

This year Crystal organized 7 sessions of the NOFA-NY winter conference, with 702 participants in total from both Eastern New York and across the state. The topics ranged from making market pivots during a pandemic to salad green production, and included many expert farmer speakers from across New York. The sessions were all recorded and continue to be accessed by both farmers and gardeners throughout the state and country.

In addition to the conference itself, the sessions attracted the attention of the interim editor of The Natural Farmer, a

publication which is sent to members of the Northeast Organic Farming Associations in all Northeast states (19,000 members). Stories were published on the market pivots session and on the salad session, including the results of Crystal's lettuce variety trials.

Work with NOFA-NY is proving synergistic in enhancing the impact of Cornell Cooperative Extensions work both near and far and Crystal looks forward to continuing to strengthen the relationship between CCE and NOFA-NY.



## New Podcast on UV Technology Field Trials in ENY

### *Teresa Rusinek, Vegetable Specialist*

In our recently recorded podcast "Shining UV Light on Plant Pathogen Management", ENYCHP vegetable production specialist Teresa Rusinek is joined by Nick Skinner, UV researcher at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; grower Larry Eckhardt from Kinderhook Creek Farm and vegetable specialist Charles Bornt to discuss the development and implementation of ultra violet light dosing as a tool to manage some of the most challenging diseases in cucurbit crop production.

The podcast is linked on our ENYCHP website <https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/podcasts.php>, and can be found at <https://soundcloud.com/easternnewyorkvegnews/shining-uv-light-on-plant-pathogen-management>.





**January—March 2021**

**275** Phone Consults

**629** E-mail Consults

**67** Farm Visits

**92** Webinars/Distance Learning

**5738** Participants in Distance Learning

Daily, personalized, farm-specific vineyard  
report addressing weather and pests—  
delivered to **193** growers for a total of  
**16,405** 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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