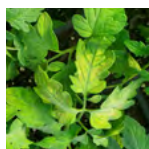




VEGE

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Volume 21 • Issue 4 • April 2, 2025



Spring
Greenhouse
Roundup

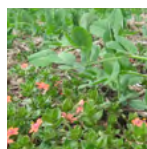
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2025
Cornell Integrated Crop and
Pest Management Guidelines for
Commercial Vegetable Production

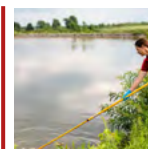
2025 Cornell
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Guidelines Now
Available!

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Early Season
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Agricultural Water
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Update

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Spring Greenhouse Roundup

Judson Reid, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell Vegetable Program

With April here greenhouses are in full swing. Vegetable transplants such as peppers and tomatoes are often grown side-by-side with ornamentals. This common practice makes sense, but does bring some risks that need to be considered. The most obvious risk of mixing ornamentals and vegetables in a greenhouse is the transfer of pests. Thrips, in particular, are of concern as they can transmit viruses including Tomato Spotted Wilt and Impatiens Necrotic Spot. Mites, particularly Broad Mites, can move from flowers to peppers and cause complete crop loss. But this week we'd like to highlight another risk of mixing ornamentals and vegetables: the potential contamination with Plant Growth Regulators (PGRs). These compounds are useful for the promotion of branching and flowers as well as checking shoot growth. They are intended for ornamentals, and vegetables, particularly tomatoes are susceptible to PGR drift or volatilization. Depending on the compound used, symptoms can include distortion of leaves and premature, malformed flowers on tomato plants, leading to crop loss. In some cases this means 6-8 weeks of heat, water, fertilizer and time down the drain. Tomatoes should not be directly sprayed with PGRs and when PGRs are used on ornamentals, tomatoes and other vegetables should be moved away from applications, ideally upwind.

For organic vegetable transplant growers, spring temperatures and sunshine can impact nutrient status of young seedlings. How? As organic production relies on the soil or potting mix for nutrient delivery (instead of soluble, injected forms), the moisture and temperature of the container will limit the availability of phosphorus and nitrogen. Roots need warm

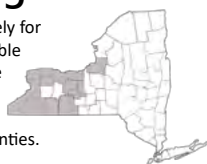


PGR drift symptoms can include distortion of leaves and premature, malformed flowers on tomato plants, leading to crop loss. Photo: Judson Reid, CVP

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About VegEdge

VegEdge newsletter is exclusively for enrollees in the Cornell Vegetable Program, a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and CCE Associations in 14 counties.



The newsletter is a service to our enrollees and is intended for educational purposes, strengthening the relationship between our enrollees, the Cornell Vegetable Program team, and Cornell University.

We're interested in your comments. Contact us at:
CCE Cornell Vegetable Program
480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14224
Email: cce-cvp@cornell.edu
Web address: cvp.cce.cornell.edu

Contributing Writers

Elizabeth Buck
Robert Hadad
Christy Hoepting
Margie Lund
Julie Kikkert
Lori Koenick
Judson Reid

Publishing Specialist/Distribution/Sponsors

Angela Ochterski

VegEdge is published 20+ times per year, parallel to the production schedule of western New York growers. Enrollees in the Cornell Vegetable Program receive a complimentary electronic subscription to the newsletter. Print copies are available for an additional fee. You must be enrolled in the Cornell Vegetable Program to subscribe to the newsletter. For information about enrolling in our program, visit CVP.CCE.CORNELL.EDU. Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, Cornell faculty, and other states' Extension personnel may request to receive a complimentary electronic subscription to VegEdge by emailing Angela Ochterski at aep63@cornell.edu. Total readership varies but averages 700 readers.

Information provided is general and educational in nature. Employees and staff of the Cornell Vegetable Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Cornell University do not endorse or recommend any specific product or service.

This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are possible. Some materials may no longer be available and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in NYS must be registered with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide usage in NYS should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) specialist or your regional DEC office.

CCE and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products or companies is made or implied. READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE.

Help us serve you better by telling us what you think. Email us at cce-cvp@cornell.edu or write to us at Cornell Vegetable Program, 480 N Main St, Canandaigua, NY 14224.



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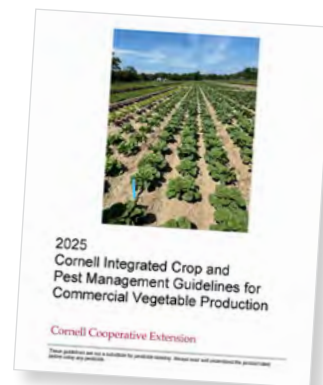
The next issue of VegEdge will be produced on April 30, 2025.

2025 Cornell Commercial Vegetable Production Guidelines Now Available!

Just released, the [2025 Integrated Crop and Pest Management Guidelines for Commercial Vegetable Production](#) provides up-to-date vegetable crop production information for New York State. Included are cultural and pest management strategies for the major vegetable crops grown in New York State. It has been designed as a practical guide for vegetable crop producers, crop consultants, ag chemical dealers, and others who advise vegetable crop producers.

Cornell Vegetable Guidelines are available as a PRINT copy (\$49.50 + shipping & handling) or ONLINE access (\$49.50). You can purchase a copy directly through The Cornell Store at <https://www.cornellstore.com/books/cornell-cooperative-ext-pmep-guidelines> or call The Cornell Store Customer Care team at (800) 624-4080 to place an order (and pay by credit card).

Alternatively, some [Cornell Cooperative Extension offices](#) in our region offer growers assistance in placing an order for Cornell Guidelines. Call ahead to make sure your local office offers that service. ●



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soil to grow and contact phosphorus, while nitrogen availability depends on microbial mineralization. During extended periods of cool, cloudy weather both will be limited, leading to deficiency symptoms in the young plants.

A final greenhouse tip we share this week is that ventilation is critical to plant health. Even though it is tempting to keep the greenhouse sealed up tight to retain heat, ventilation increases air quality by replenishing CO₂ and reducing relative humidity. This promotes steady seedling growth and reduces disease threats.



During extended periods of cool, cloudy weather phosphorus and nitrogen uptake is limited leading to the deficiency symptoms we see here. Photo: Judson Reid, CVP ●

Recent Federal Program Changes Impacting NY Vegetable Farms

Liz Higgins, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program

H2-A Filing Fee Alert – New Fee Structure and Asylum Program Fee

This alert came to me from an ENYCH farmer:

"Since last year USCIS changed the fee schedule significantly. There is no longer one flat fee for everyone (was: \$ 460). There are now different groups of employers (small/large/not for profit), and those have two different categories (under 25 employees, and over 25 employees). All pay different I-129 filing fees.

- For small employers \$ 300
- For large employers \$ 600
- For not for profits \$ 0
- And an Asylum program fee "if applicable". That got to go with a second, separate check. Otherwise, the folks in Texas will reject and not process the I-129.

Poor language in the fee schedule (particularly the "if applicable") for the asylum program fee made me think that fee did not apply, so my application now is being returned for re-filing. Admittedly, there is some language somewhere on the USCIS website (fee schedule, FAQ) that explains this in 5 pages of text."

This is the information from the [USCIS Page](#):

Q. What is the Asylum Program Fee and who pays it?

A. The Asylum Program Fee (\$600) is a new fee paid by employers who file either Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker; Form I-129CW, Petition for a CNMI-Only Nonimmigrant Transitional Worker; or Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker. This fee helps fund the asylum program. The fee rule includes special discounts for nonprofits and small employers, as described further below.

All the work at USCIS is connected—when we have a more fully funded corps of asylum officers, our non-asylum officers can concentrate more exclusively on adjudicating cases from employers and other filers, bringing down processing times for everyone.

Q. How do I pay the Asylum Program Fee? Is there a separate form or paperwork?

A. Payment of the Asylum Program Fee does not require a separate form or paperwork. If you pay by check or money order, you should submit the Asylum Program Fee separately. If you pay online by credit card, you may use one credit card form for all fees, including the Asylum Program fee.

Q. If separate fees are required when I file multiple forms together, may I pay with one check?

A. No. We are transitioning to electronically processing immigration benefit requests, which requires us to use multiple systems to process multi-form submissions. We may reject your entire package if you submit a single, combined payment for multiple forms.

Q. What are the fee discounts for small employers?

A. The fee rule defines small employer petitioners as those with 25 or fewer full-time equivalent employees. Such petitioners will pay \$300 rather than the full \$600 for the Asylum Program Fee.

In addition, for the fees for Form I-129 and Form I-129CW, small employers will pay a discounted fee of up to 50% off. For the precise discounted fees, please see the full fee schedule, Form G-1055.

continued on page 4

Q. What is a “full-time equivalent employee” in determining whether a petitioner qualifies for the small-employer discounts to the Form I-129 fee and Asylum Program Fee?

A. Generally, the number of full-time equivalent employees equals the number of full-time employees plus the number of part-time employees aggregated to full-time equivalents at the time of filing. The IRS defines an employee as an individual who receives “wages,” with applicable taxes deducted, along with Social Security and unemployment deductions, and who receives a W-2 reporting their income.

Q. Do noncitizen workers count toward the number of full-time equivalent employees?

A. You should count all current workers you employ at the time of filing, regardless of immigration status.

Q. Do seasonal workers count as full-time equivalent employees?

A. Full-time equivalent employees include seasonal nonimmigrant workers if they are paid as employees, not contractors. You should count all seasonal workers you employ at the time of filing.

Q. Do the beneficiaries on the petition count as full-time equivalent employees?

A. The beneficiary of a petition does not count as an employee unless they are currently working for the petitioner as an employee at the time of filing.

ALERT: At intake, we determine whether the payment you submitted matches the correct fees due. If you do not submit the correct fee, we must reject your form, even if you have submitted an overpayment.

The required fees for Form I-129, Form I-129CW, and Form I-140 depend on how you answer the form’s questions about your status as a nonprofit or small employer. See our [Web Alert](#) for more information: [USCIS Reminds Certain Employment-Based Petitioners to Submit the Correct Required Fees](#).

You can find additional filing fee information by visiting our [Filing Fees](#) page, our [Form G-1055, Fee Schedule](#), and our [Frequently Asked Questions on the USCIS Fee Rule](#) page.

NYS Farmers Still Owed Millions in USDA Payments after Federal Freeze

Many news organizations have recently [highlighted the chaos that the freeze of funding from USDA grant programs has caused](#) for farmers and agricultural organizations across the US. The funding freeze at USDA has targeted two main categories of grant funding: grant applications that link agricultural work to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and those enacted under the Inflation Reduction Act, which earmarked more than [\\$19.5 billion](#) to be paid out over several years, mostly for conservation, infrastructure and energy efficiency projects.

Why is this a problem? Most USDA (and other federal grants) are paid on a reimbursement basis. Therefore, the freeze has been a significant hardship to individuals and organizations who have started projects based on their signed contracts with USDA but had not yet received payment for their work. Because most USDA grants reimburse farmers for their expenses **after** they have paid for the project, a farmer who is waiting for payment may have unanticipated cash-flow problems or may now be responsible for interest payment on loans that are financing the project while they wait for federal reimbursement. Compounding the problem is the uncertainty of whether or not payment will ever come. This is a problem for farms in New York. In New York State the total USDA Inflation Reduction Act investment was \$56 million with \$31 million for REAP (Rural Energy for America Program); \$4 million for CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program); and \$21 million for EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program).

The IRA pause is also creating some confusion, since it funds many of the same USDA NRCS practices and programs that are also funded by the farm bill. Farmers sign contracts to commit to certain practices but may not know what underlying legislation funded the program, so they don’t know if their contract might be on the hit list.

Following the initial freeze, courts have repeatedly ordered the administration to grant access to all funds, but agencies have taken a piecemeal approach, releasing funding in “tranches.” In late February, the USDA announced that it was [releasing \\$20 million](#) to farmers who had already been awarded grants — the agency’s first tranche. According to Mike Lavender, policy director with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, that \$20 million amounts to “less than one percent” of money owed to farmers with signed contracts. [His team estimates](#) that three IRA-funded programs have legally promised roughly \$2.3 billion through 30,715 conservation contracts for ranchers, farmers, and foresters. Those contracts have been through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. “In some respects, it’s a positive sign that some of it’s been released,” said Lavender. “But I think, more broadly, it’s so insignificant. For the vast majority, [this] does absolutely nothing.”

USDA Provides \$10 Billion to Commodity Crops to Offset Economic Hardship, but Discontinues Programs that Supported Local Food Purchases

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, on National Agriculture Day, announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing up to \$10 billion directly to [some] agricultural producers through the [Emergency Commodity Assistance Program \(ECAP\)](#) for the 2024 crop year. Administered by USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), ECAP will help commodity crop and oil seed producers mitigate the impacts of increased input costs and falling commodity prices. Unfortunately, specialty crop farms and other producers are not included in this assistance program.

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“Producers are facing higher costs and market uncertainty, and the Trump Administration is ensuring they get the support they need without delay,” said Secretary Rollins. “With clear direction from Congress, USDA has prioritized streamlining the process and accelerating these payments ahead of schedule, ensuring farmers have the resources necessary to manage rising expenses and secure financing for next season.”

Eligible Commodities and Payment Rates

The commodities below are eligible for these per-acre payment rates. Eligible producers must report 2024 crop year planted and prevented planted acres to FSA on an FSA-578, Report of Acreage form. Producers who have not previously reported 2024 crop year acreage or filed a notice of loss for prevented planted crops must submit an acreage report by the Aug. 15, 2025, deadline. Eligible producers can visit fsa.usda.gov/ecap for eligibility and payment details.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| • Wheat - \$30.69 | • Lentils - \$19.30 | Eligible oilseeds: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canola - \$31.83• Crambe - \$19.08• Flax - \$20.97• Mustard - \$11.36• Rapeseed - \$23.63• Safflower - \$26.32• Sesame - \$16.83• Sunflower - \$27.23 |
| • Corn - \$42.91 | • Small Chickpeas - \$31.45 | |
| • Sorghum - \$42.52 | • Large Chickpeas - \$24.02 | |
| • Barley - \$21.67 | | |
| • Oats - \$77.66 | | |
| • Long & medium grain rice - \$76.94 | | |
| • Peanuts - \$75.51 | | |
| • Soybeans - \$29.76 | | |
| • Dry peas - \$16.02 | | |
| | | |

Unfortunately, Other USDA Programs Focused on Specialty Crops Have Been Discontinued

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced earlier this month it's ending two programs – [Local Food Purchase Assistance](#) and [Local Food for Schools](#) – that provided \$1 billion in funding for locally grown food purchases. States were informed last week that their agreements would be terminated following a 60-day notification period.

The move cancels about \$660 million in funding this year for the Local Food for Schools program, which is active in 40 U.S. states, as well as about \$420 million for a second program called the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement, which helps food banks and other local groups provide food to their communities. The USDA programs were funded through the agency's Commodity Credit Corporation, a Depression-era fund created to buy products directly from farmers.

“As a pandemic-era program, LFPA (Local Food Purchase Assistance) will now be sunsetted, marking a return to long-term, fiscally responsible initiatives,” an agency spokesperson said in a statement. ●

Strawberry Update

Anya Stansell, Small Fruit Specialist, CCE Harvest NY

It's April, and unmulched strawberries are starting to push out new leaves. Some growers who applied mulch to their crop prefer to remove the mulch around this time. Others prefer to keep the mulch on for at least a few more weeks, to prevent an early bloom. Removing mulch now may marginally speed bloom, but will also give the strawberries more time to harvest energy from the sun. Keeping mulch on can deplete the energy reserves of the plants, but may slow bloom by a few days. When removing the mulch, a light application of fertilizer amounting to 10-20 pounds of nitrogen per acre can speed leaf development.

Many growers in Central and Western New York had unexpected challenges with their strawberries in summer 2024. Notably, fields that were in their first fruiting year had large swaths of collapsing berries. Some of the growers with struggling fields had preventatively applied fungicides such as Ridomil Gold (mefenoxam) and Phostrol (mono and di-potassium salts of phosphorous acid) or Propylt (potassium phosphite). In many cases, we could not identify the pathogen behind the dieback. Abiotic factors, verticillium wilt, and several pathogens that contribute to black root rot complex, including Rhizoctonia and Fusarium were identified from numerous samples submitted to the Cornell Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic.

Our cohort of berry specialists suspected that the mild, wet winter of 2024 contributed to soil conditions that promoted damage of strawberry crowns from a diversity of pathogens already present in the soil. The repeated freezing and thawing of the ground likely created microscopic injuries in the tissue that made it easier for pathogens to enter. In addition, the slow, mild autumn prevented strawberry plants from properly entering dormancy, which reduced the integrity of the crown's structure. While this winter was much snowier and cooler than the last, the bouts of warm weather create damage in the strawberry crowns just as last year. The frequent snow melt creates a wet soil environment that allows pathogens to travel through the water. If growers had issues in their fields in 2024, the same issues will likely reemerge in 2025. ●



New strawberry leaves emerging from a 'Jewel' strawberry plant on March 17, 2025.
Photo: Anya Stansell, HNY

Early Season Weed Control in Peas

Julie Kikkert, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell Vegetable Program

Peas do not compete well with weeds and it is wise to avoid fields with known serious weed problems. Ideally, weed control in peas and other vegetables should start several years before planting the crop. You'll get the best results by using good crop rotation, cover crops and other practices that suppress weeds. This is especially true for weeds that are problematic in peas such as corn chamomile ("daisy"), nightshades, and Canada thistle. Ideally, fall applications of herbicides would have been applied to control any daisy or thistle problems for the coming year.

Conventional growers should note that peas are sensitive to residues of several herbicides. Peas are very sensitive to atrazine. Do not plant in fields where more than one pound of atrazine was applied the previous year. There is an 18-month restriction for planting into fields where mesotrione and clopyralid have been applied. Make sure to know the history of herbicide use in your field and note planting restrictions for peas.

Herbicides (Early Season)

For peas that haven't yet been planted, there are pre-plant incorporated (PPI) or pre-emergence (PreE) herbicides that can be used.

- Prowl H2O (*pendimethalin*) is applied PPI. It does not control emerged weeds. It has good annual grass activity. In addition, Prowl is effective against lambsquarters, purslane, pigweed species and velvetleaf. It may be applied in a tank mix with Pursuit or Sharpen.
- Sharpen (*saflufenacil*) can be used PPI or PreE, but at the rate used in peas, provides only fair control of lambsquarters, pigweed, eastern black nightshade and velvetleaf. Do not apply if peas are cracking or emerged.
- Pursuit (*imazethapyr*) can be used PPI or PreE (up to 3 days after planting). Its strengths are redroot pigweed, mustards and nightshades. When used PPI, it also has good activity against common lambsquarters.
- Dual Magnum (*s-metolachlor*) or Dual II Magnum (*s-metolachlor* + the safener *benoxacor*) – Pay special attention to the application method here! Do not incorporate Dual Magnum as it is only labeled pre-emergence after planting. If you are using Dual II Magnum, it can be used either PRE or PPI. If soils are wet and cold during emergence, Dual may delay maturity and/or reduce yields. Dual provides excellent control of annual grasses and yellow nutsedge. It is also good on several broad-leaves including lambsquarters, purslane, pigweed, galinsoga, and eastern black nightshade. Dual is an excellent choice if you have the right soil moisture conditions.
- Command 3ME (*clomazone*) (PreE) has good activity against annual grasses and some broadleaves (esp. Velvetleaf). Be aware that peas will turn white in areas where the herbicide is overlapped. The peas will grow out of this and usually not be harmed.
- Reflex (*fomesafen*) is applied PreE to both the crop and weeds. Strengths are pigweed, mustard, galinsoga and Eastern black nightshade. Activity against hairy nightshade is only fair. Also has good activity on lambsquarters, purslane, and common ragweed.

PPI and PreE herbicides won't provide complete control of weeds alone. You'll need to be scouting and managing weeds well into the season. Look for follow-up information in VegEdge on how to manage those pesky weeds once your peas are growing.

Cultivation

Growers may begin blind cultivation with a tine weeder or flexible harrow, prior to the ground cracking. The goal is to kill very tiny weeds at the white thread stage. Be aware that peas are very susceptible to breakage if they are in the crook stage before ground crack, until the seed leaves are unfolded and horizontal. Organic growers may continue tine weeding or other cultivation depending on planting configuration for fresh or processing market. There is a concern with processing peas of bringing up stones that will be picked up with the harvest machine. Young processing peas will withstand a light rolling to tamp down the soil and stones after tine weeding. For more tips on weed management for organic peas, refer to the [Cornell Production Guide for Organic Peas for Processing](https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/42896) at <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/42896> ●

Pre-Harvest Agricultural Water (Subpart E) Update

Craig Kahlke, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lake Ontario Fruit Program

FSMA has published a [final rule on Pre-Harvest Agricultural Water](https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-modernization-act-fsma/fsma-final-rule-pre-harvest-agricultural-water) <<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-modernization-act-fsma/fsma-final-rule-pre-harvest-agricultural-water>>. Largest growers need to be in compliance by early April 2025. On your FSMA inspection during this year's harvest, inspectors will be checking records and educating in this first year.

This rule applies to water used up to harvest. Pre-harvest ag water includes water you use in your crop protectants and spraying the edible portion of the crop anytime during the growing season. NOTE: This does not apply to water used at harvest and post-harvest. That final rule is unchanged and folks need to comply now.

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How to Get Started

You need to do an **agricultural water assessment**. This is a comprehensive look at your use of ag water on your farm and where the potential risks may be. If the risks are high, you need to have mitigation measures in place to reduce the risks.

=> This rule does NOT require water testing as part of your agricultural water assessment. However, if you currently do water testing for a buyer driven third party food safety audit, you can use these test results in analyzing your water quality and it can be part of your assessment.

=> An agricultural water system assessment—which has been required in the past and is required for a lot of third party buyer-driven audits—is only part of your agricultural water assessment. See the [FSMA Produce Safety Rule: Agricultural Water Systems Inspection is Different from the Agricultural Water Assessment](#) document from the Produce Safety Alliance, February 2025, for more information.

Additional Resources

[FDA Agricultural Water Assessment Factsheet](#)

[FDA Agricultural Water Assessment Builder](#)

[MS Word Templates](#) (this link will download a set of farm food safety templates created by the Produce Safety Alliance). < <https://resources.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/documents/Templates.docx>>

If you have not already done so, it is highly recommended that you attend a live webinar or watch a recorded video presentation. Growers who have attended the PSA Grower Training Courses in the past and who have received certificates should have been emailed the information. [Sign up to view the video presentation.](#)

Questions?

Don't hesitate to contact Robert Hadad (vegetable growers) at rg26@cornell.edu, 585-739-4065, or Craig Kahlke (fruit growers) at cjk37@cornell.edu, 585-735-5448. ●

Upcoming Events

Expanding Your Horticultural/Produce Operation

April 11, 2025 (Friday) | 12:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Willing Town Hall, 1431 State Rt 19 S, Wellsville, NY 14895

Topics include blueberry production, high tunnel siting, marketing considerations, extending the raspberry, blackberry and strawberry seasons, soil testing, managing soil pH and fertility, and local farmers market opportunities. Cost: Free! Pre-register to to Lynn Bliven (CCE Allegany) at 716-244-0290 by April 9.

Finger Lakes Agritourism Networking Session

April 29, 2025 (Tuesday) | 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Shortsville Reindeer Farm, 4285 Shortsville Rd, Shortsville

This event includes a farm tour with owners sharing how they turned their hobbies into a business, insights from Cornell's Agritourism Program Team, and discussions with tourism agencies on promoting agritourism.

Networking is a key focus, with dedicated time to connect and share marketing materials with tourism promotion representatives and fellow attendees. Cost: \$10. [Register](#) by April 28. ●

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Greg Curcio
(585) 303-4691
gcurcio@seedway.com



Sara Christ, 585.794.8937
Jason Detzel, 845.707.5631
www.stokeseeds.com

Cornell Cooperative Extension Cornell Vegetable Program

480 North Main Street
Canandaigua, NY 14424



VegEdge is the highly regarded newsletter produced by the Cornell Vegetable Program. It provides readers with information on upcoming meetings, pesticide updates, pest management strategies, cultural practices, marketing ideas, and research results from Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension. VegEdge is produced every few weeks, with frequency increasing leading up to and during the growing season.

Contact Us

VEGETABLE SPECIALISTS

Elizabeth Buck | 585-406-3419 cell | emb273@cornell.edu
fresh market vegetables, weed management, soil health

Robert Hadad | 585-739-4065 cell | rgh26@cornell.edu
farm food safety, organic, business & marketing, fresh market vegetables

Christy Hoepting | 585-721-6953 cell | cah59@cornell.edu
onions, cabbage, broccoli, garlic, pesticide management

Julie Kikkert, Team Leader | 585-313-8160 cell | jrk2@cornell.edu
processing crops (table beets, carrots, peas, snap beans, sweet corn)

Lori Koenick | 585-469-5798 cell | lbk75@cornell.edu
fresh market vegetables, mushrooms, urban agriculture

Margie Lund | 607-377-9109 cell | mel296@cornell.edu
potatoes, dry beans, post-harvest handling and storage

Judson Reid | 585-313-8912 cell | jer11@cornell.edu
greenhouses/high tunnels, small farming operations, fresh market vegs

PROGRAM ASSISTANTS & SUPPORT

Camila Ichazo | lichazo@cornell.edu

Sarah Mertson | slm369@cornell.edu

Angela Ochterski | aep63@cornell.edu

ADMINISTRATION

Peter Landre | ptl2@cornell.edu

Steve Reiners | sr43@cornell.edu

**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Cornell Vegetable Program**

For more information about our program, email cce-cvp@cornell.edu or visit CVP.CCE.CORNELL.EDU



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