



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News

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Editors: Nathan Johannang & 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 Johannang, 618-939-3434, njohann@illinois.edu or Bronwyn Aly 618-695-2441, baly@illinois.edu. The ***Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News*** is available on the web at: <https://extension.illinois.edu/specialty-crops/ifvn>. To receive or be removed from email notification of new postings of this newsletter, contact Nathan Johannang 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: <https://extension.illinois.edu/lfssf>

- **Addressing Legal Farm Risks** | A series of free webinars from IL Extension and Farm Commons designed to minimize legal risk and build resilience for IL farmers. Additional information can be found [here](#).
January 23 [Farm Liability and Insurance Basics](#)
- **2023 From Food to Flowers: Everything Local The Illinois Food, Farm Market & Specialty Crops Conference** | January 11-13, 2023 Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL. Save the date as registration and conference details will be coming soon!
- **Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School** | Wednesday February 8, 2023 in Mt. Vernon, IL at the Doubletree Inn. Save the date and look for registration and program details soon.

News & Announcements

Illinois Farm to School Network – Virtual Event

Join Illinois Farm Bureau, Seven Generations Ahead and the National Center of Technology to discuss the Illinois Farm to School Network. Enjoy this two-hour virtual event. Learn the who, what, why, where, and how to be part of the Farm to School the program as a buyer and a seller. Gain understanding of some of the tools and strategies for buying and selling local food. Hear from success stories around the country and here in Illinois. Then finish the session off with a listening session designed to uncover barriers to farm to school, what is currently working and what isn't and recommendations for policy, program, logistical and infrastructure solution to make Farm to School more successful and accessible in IL. Your contribution helps build a more resilient food system in Illinois.

Dates: Thursday, October 27th from 2:00-4:00PM or Thursday, December 8th from 2:00-4:00pm [RSVP Today](#)

Positioning the Next Generation for Transition of the Family Farm

Family farms must select the one or two people in the next generation that can successfully lead and own the farm, but who is that?

Illinois Farm Bureau is offering a free, full-day farm transition seminar at its Annual Meeting to help your family work through these challenges. It's a valuable opportunity for everyone involved in your farm to add just one day to your Annual Meeting itinerary in exchange for information that will shape your family farm for generations to come. Dan Bean from CMA Consulting will be presenting this information on Friday, December 2, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Participants will walk away with next steps and the foundation to bring the next generation onto the farm.

Here's what you can look forward to:

- Expert advice, models and a framework for completing this process
- Time to reflect on your own farm by collecting and recording your thoughts at key points
- Opportunities to learn from peers who are in similar situations

[Register Here](#)

Regional Reports

From the St. Louis Metro East... The St. Louis Metro East has been running dry but overall has experienced some of the best weather for agritainment and u-pick operations. The last significant rain any of the region got was September 22, and since then a grand total of 0.28 inches has come this way. The ground has hardened considerably, making fruit tree removal/renovation a bit more challenging. Temperatures have been gradually dropping since that September 22 rain, and the region experienced

its first dip into the upper 20s the week of October 16, which is right on par with the region's first average frost based on a 30-year average. Because of the dry conditions, annual strawberry producers reported irrigating not only to maintain growth but to capture the heat of the sun during the day ahead of light frost events in lieu of needing to apply and pull frost covers this early. Temperatures are expected to climb back into the 70s in time for another great pre-Halloween weekend.

Apple harvest is coming to an end with cultivars like EverCrisp and Granny Smith. The trial looking at calyx-end cracking in EverCrisp will be harvested and evaluated to see if any of the growth regulator treatments had any effect. Reflective mylar film was placed between rows to improve apple color. While this was not part of the treatment, it was in the trial. Look for details at the upcoming winter meetings. Fall greens and pumpkins are still in harvest and both crops are reported as good.

As a reminder to Illinois cider producers, the From Food to Flowers: Everything Local conference (previously the Illinois Specialty Crops Conference) will be hosting the annual Illinois State cider contest again this year. If you intend to enter the contest, make sure to reserve some of your product now by freezing. The 2023 From Food to Flowers: Everything Local is being held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Springfield January 11 - 13. The cider contest will be held Thursday, January 12 and awards will be presented at the evening banquet that same day. [Cider contest details](#) will be coming soon at or you can contact ISHS Cider Contest coordinator, Ken Johnson at 217-243-7424 or kjohnso@illinois.edu.



*Reflective mylar film to improve apple color.
Photo credit: E. Wahle*

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

From southwestern Illinois (Waterloo)... Our area continues to be exceptionally dry for this time of year. We have gotten little of any measurable rainfall in the last month and most every day has been sunny and some rather windy days as well. Temperatures have been very pleasant overall with most days being up in the 60s and 70s. So far this has been an almost perfect weather year for any fall agritourism as we haven't really had a bad weekend in the last month or two. Last week we got some of the coldest weather of the season with a killing freeze and temperatures in the upper 20s to 30 degrees.

The dry weather was over all good for pumpkin and apple harvest. There were less issues with fruit rots and good conditions for field access. Fall planted lettuce, other cool season vegetables and also fall cover crops have been struggling to really take off. Even cover crops planted well over a month ago still are only partially emerged. Rain is forecasted for the last full week of October and hopefully that comes through.

At home, on the farm, I had a very good apple harvest and picked a nice crop of Pixie Crunch and Goldrush. They could have been thinned a little better to increase fruit, but they ended up sizing better than I expected, even the Pixie Crunch which is naturally a smaller apple. Pumpkin harvest has been very good overall. As I have mentioned, our crop has been a late due to stalled growth during dry weather in July, but by now most everything has matured and looks good. Size has been exceptional for most varieties, I think due to the more mild cooler weather in August when fruit set and sizing was occurring. We had no melonworms, had very good control of powdery mildew, no other major insect or disease pests that could not be managed. The only issue as of the last two weeks especially has been mice and voles. I have had a big push of fruit feeding recently. I think the frost, and dry weather has left them looking even more for food and moisture. We have the majority of what we need already harvested, but the voles are annoying when gleaning a few last things out of the field. They will look good on the top, but when you pick them up you will see damage on the bottom of fruit. Something new this year I never had seen was what I think is mice or vole feeding on pumpkin stems after harvest in bins. I pulled a few pumpkins from the top of a bin and saw a pumpkin that had the stem chewed on and one the stem was completely chewed off! I think this is a random chance occurrence, but annoying of course.



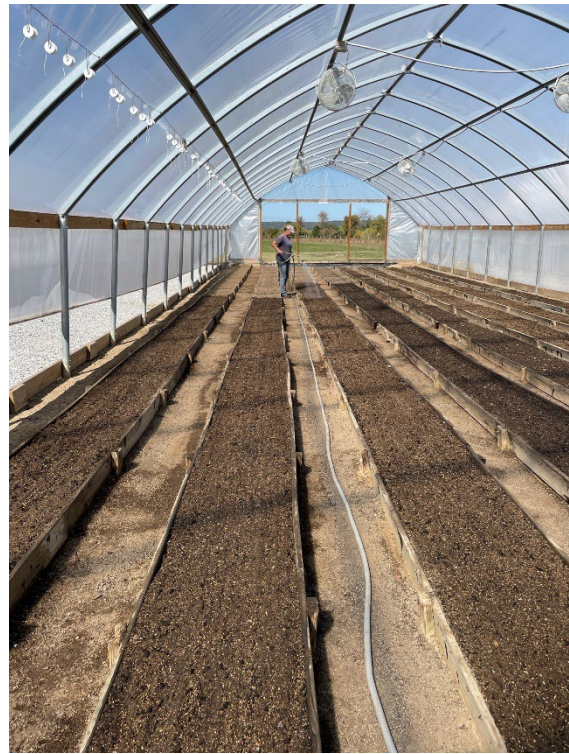
Pixie Crunch apples (left) and harvested pumpkin fruit in bin, with mouse feeding on the on the stem post-harvest. Photos: N. Johanning

Let's hope we can get some rain and some more nice fall weather as we head into November!

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

From Dixon Springs Ag Center...The far southeastern part of Illinois remains extremely dry. The first part of the week of October 18, we saw temperatures drop into the mid to lower 20s. On the night of October 20, Cape Girardeau measured its coldest temperature on record for the month of October at 22 degrees.

On October 3 we seeded two different cover crop species in the 8 rows within one of our in ground, raised bed high tunnels as we begin work on our latest funded grant project. We used spring oats at a rate of 30 lbs/acre and crimson clover at a rate of 10lbs/acre. When one bed is approximately 160 square feet, very little seed is needed and doesn't seem like near enough as you are walking down the aisle trying to uniformly "broadcast" tiny clover and oat seeds. We also spread approximately 30 lbs/acre of nitrogen in the form of 12-12-12 to offset any nitrogen tie up that might potentially occur from the compost that was added to the beds as a soil amendment. We have experienced delays in growth in other plantings in the last season or two and have suspected a bit of nitrogen tie up as the cause. The seed and fertilizer were watered in using a hose instead of drip irrigation. We wanted moisture to be uniform across the whole bed surface and also a good soaking to help improve the seed/soil contact. The beds have been hand watered daily to maintain moisture and it took about 7 days for seeds to germinate. The other high tunnel will serve as the control tunnel and no cover crops will be seeded or grown there for the duration of the grant period.





Photos by B. Aly.

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

Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management

Update on Melon Worms

As a lot of you know, the 2021 pumpkin growing season ended with many growers having an outbreak of caterpillars on their pumpkins after they had finished spraying insecticides for the year. These caterpillars also proved to be pretty hard to kill once growers started to attempt to control them.

For the 2022 growing season, we wanted to get ahead of the problem and see if we could intercept the moth before we had a problem with the caterpillars. To this end, we sent traps to growers throughout the state and monitored for melon worm activity. This year it appears we may have been spared from experiencing this particular pest problem. We seem to have been lucky this time around, but we would like to keep monitoring in the coming years.





Melon worms are a sporadic pest and we do not want a repeat of 2021 if we can help it. For those of you that had traps, if you would like to keep trapping next year let me know (kathy@illinois.edu).

Photos courtesy of Monique Liguori Weinberg.

Kacie Athey (217-244-9916; kathy@illinois.edu)

Less Seriously...

Since I should probably not, I'll let you caption this picture... 😊

Feel free to share your caption with us if you feel so inclined.

Photo: N. Johanning



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
NICK FRILLMAN , Woodford, Livingston, & McLean counties	309-663-8306	frillma2@illinois.edu
ZACHARY GRANT , Cook County	708-679-6889	zgrant2@illinois.edu
DOUG GUCKER , DeWitt, Macon, & Piatt counties	217-877-6042	dgucker@illinois.edu
GRACE MARGHERIO , Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center, St. Clair County	217-244-3547	gracem@illinois.edu
GRANT McCARTY , Jo Daviess, Stephenson, & Winnebago counties	815-235-4125	gmccarty@illinois.edu
KATHRYN PEREIRA , Cook County	773-233-2900	kpereira@illinois.edu
Extension Educators – Horticulture		
CHRIS ENROTH , Henderson, Knox, McDonough, & Warren counties	309-837-3939	cenroth@illinois.edu
ANDREW HOLSINGER , Christian, Jersey, Macoupin, & Montgomery counties	217-532-3941	aholsing@illinois.edu
Extension Educators – Commercial Agriculture		
ELIZABETH WAHLE , Fruit & Vegetable Production	618-344-4230	wahle@illinois.edu
NATHAN JOHANNING , Madison, Monroe, & St. Clair counties	618-939-3434	njohann@illinois.edu
Campus-based Extension Specialists		
KACIE ATHEY , Entomology	217-244-9916	kathey@illinois.edu
MOHAMMAD BABADOOST , Plant Pathology	217-333-1523	babadoos@illinois.edu

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Return Address:

Nathan Johanning
University of Illinois Extension
901 Illinois Avenue; PO Box 117
Waterloo, IL 62298



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