



July 2008

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Informative presentations were given on “Bramble Activities at the Upper

North Carolina Specialty Crops Program Newsletter

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Editor

Current Research Projects

2008 Field Day Dates:

- ***July 24**, Specialty Melons Field Day, 4:00pm-until, Cunningham Research Station, Kinston, NC
- ***August 7**, Annual Tomato Field Day (pumpkins, gourds, and squash), Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station, Fletcher, NC
- ***October 16**, Pumpkin/Gourd Field Day, Mountain Research Station, Waynesville, NC

2008 Specialty Crops Field Day



The 2008 Specialty Crops Field Day was hosted by the Upper Mountain Research Station (UMRS) in Laurel Springs, NC on June 25, 2008. About seventy-five growers, industry, consultants and technical people attended the field day.

The field day began with Tom Melton, Presiding Assistant Director, NC Cooperative Extension, NC State University; Johnny Wynne, Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NC State University; Richard Reich, Agricultural Services Assistant Commissioner, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; and Les Miller, Superintendent, Upper Mountain Research Station, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services welcoming everyone to field day. Available for sampling were raspberries and blackberries grown at the Piedmont Research Station in Salisbury, NC.

Mountain Research Station and Beyond” by Dr. Gina Fernandez, Department of Horticultural Science, NC State University.



Dr. Fernandez discussed the NCSU brambles breeding program. She recently released a primocane fruiting red raspberry, 'Nantahala'. This cultivar is adapted to the high elevations of western North Carolina. There were plenty of samples of the different Raspberry lines for the tour attendees to taste test.

Dr. Jeanine Davis, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Horticultural Science, NC State University and Richard Boylan, Area Specialized Agent, NC Cooperative Extension, NC State University, gave a very informative presentation on “Tomatoes in an Organic Production System” which outlined the process of growing, harvesting and marketing heirloom and heirloom-type organic tomatoes that not only look but also taste great.



The strawberry stop featured a presentation by Dr. Barclay Poling, Professor, Department of Horticultural Science, NC State University, on “Albion and Seascape Day-Neutral Strawberry Trails at the Upper Mountain Research

Station”. This presentation included a brief history of Day-neutral Strawberries, Experimental Objectives (2000-2007), and Major findings in 2007. The experiments have demonstrated that the California day-neutral cultivars, ‘Seascape’ and ‘Albion,’ have very high productive potential. There has been an increase in research emphasis on the newer California DN ‘Albion’ (a recent release from the University of California, United States Patent PPI6228) because of its attractive appearance, good size and superior flavor. ‘Albion’ is a promising candidate for both local marketing in the summer and fall and fresh market shipping.

Bill Jester, Extension Associate & Horticulturist and NC Specialty Crops Coordinator, Department of Horticultural Science, NC State University gave a presentation on “Lettuce Adaption Trials and Research in the North Carolina Mountains”. This research is supported by the Golden Leaf Foundation and includes work on varietal selection, spacing, phosphorus fertilization, herbicides and diseases. Jester covered production practices, comparing production on plastic mulch with bare-ground production and identifying several cultivars, as Platinum and Ideal that have performed well in his research. He also discussed the growth and physiology of Romaine lettuce and how to determine when to harvest it.

Lunch was sponsored by [Dole Food Company](#), represented by Peter Gilmore, vice president of Eastern Seaboard Sourcing.



The afternoon presentations were presented by Chris Gunter, and Nick Augustini.

Vegetable variety in other southern states is also on the rise. "What's been interesting is to see the product mix change over the past few years," notes Martin Eubanks, director of marketing for the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA), Columbia, SC. "We're seeing items that might be considered staple items, such as sweet corn, on the increase just because it adds to our product mix during the harvest season. This way, retailers can get more items in one stop. Also we've seen tremendous increase in Hispanic items, such as cilantro and mixed peppers, and those have significantly added to the product mix. We're growing a lot of parsley, green onions and oddball things like dandelion greens. We also have leafy greens year-round. There are niche markets out there and we have folks growing for those niche markets."

New Team Member

The North Carolina State University Fresh Produce Safety Team just gained a new teammate. Rod Gurganus joined the Value-added and Alternative Agriculture team centered in Kannapolis. Rod is stationed in the eastern part of the state with an office at the Vernon James Research and Extension Center. Rod will be working with the NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force on Good Agricultural Practices education for county extension agents and growers. He will also work to identify and implement value-added and innovation opportunities for fruit and vegetable growers in North Carolina. Rod may be new to the Task Force, but he is not new to North Carolina Cooperative Extension. His was previously the county extension agent in Beaufort County. He held that position for over nine years. Rod is looking forward to working with agents and growers from around the state. Be sure to welcome him to his new position when you meet him.

Attention Growers and Agents

Specialty Crops Melon and Watermelon Field Day News

During the Specialty Crops Melon and Watermelon Field Day on Thursday, July 24, 2008 from 3:30 pm until 6:30 pm held at the Cunningham Research Station in Kinston, NC there will be an in-service training for growers and agents.

The Annual Meeting of the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX.org)

Approximately 50 diversely experienced fruit growers from all across the USA and Canada will hold their annual conference and tours around Elizabeth City from Thursday evening, July 24 through Saturday night, July 26, 2008. They will be hosted by the Pasquotank County Center of NC Cooperative Extension. A detailed description of this meeting and tours can be read at the following web site. <http://www.nafex.org/meeting.htm>

Educational and Informative Websites

Vegetable and Fruit Daily Market Prices - AMS-USDA
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/mncs/fvwires.htm>

North Carolina Specialty Crops Program
www.ncspecialtycrops.org

University of California Good Agricultural Practices <http://ucgaps.ucdavis.edu/>

Specialty Agriculture Reports, ERS - USDA
<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/erssors/specialty/>

Specialty Melons and Muskmelons
<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/rhodcv/hort410/musk/musk.htm>

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Want to know more about the program? Contact our Program Coordinator: Bill Jester
Phone: 252/526/4445
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Program activities in western NC?
Contact our Extension Specialist:
Jeanine Davis
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Marketing questions?
Contact Nick Augostini
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Address Change

Effective July 1, 2008
Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center
455 Research Drive
Mills River, NC 28759.