



**June 2019**

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# Mentoring Program gives market gardens in Clark Co. a boost

*By Matt Ernst, independent writer*

More than a dozen market gardens selling this season in Clark County are new since 2014, and the Clark County Vegetable Production Mentoring Program (Mentor Program) is a big reason for the new market gardens.

The Mentor Program's roots are older than five years, said David Davis, the county's agriculture and natural resources extension agent. The Kentucky Horticulture Council, through a Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund grant, in 2011 started a plasticulture education and demonstration program in Clark County. That program expanded to include low-input high tunnels in 2013-14.

The earlier programs are a big reason for the Mentor Program's success. "I went on many of the farm visits with (former) extension associate Dave Spalding (plastic mulch) and (former UK Horticulture Research Farm superintendent) Darrell Slone (high tunnels)," said Davis. He said that getting to know new growers, through those programs, helped him realize other educational needs. "There's a big difference in gardening for your home garden and growing a market garden," said Davis.

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- David Davis

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**Coming up**

**July 3** - Seven Habits for Effective Farmers Webinar Series - Evaluating Financial Health, noon-1 p.m. ET. Speaker: Iris Cui, University of Tennessee Extension. For details, visit <https://ag.tennessee.edu/cpa/Pages/webinars.aspx>. To register, go to <http://tiny.utk.edu/sevenhabits>.

**July 13** - Transitional Produce and Flower Farm Tour, 3 p.m., Happy Toes Homestead, Columbus, Ohio 43224. Free. For details and to register, go to <http://www.oeffa.org/events.php>.

**July 25** - Organic Disease and Pest Management Field Day, 9 a.m.-noon ET, Locust Ridge Organics, Brooksville KY. An Organic Association of Kentucky field day. For details and to register, visit <https://www.oak-ky.org/field-days>, or call 502-517-9629.



**At right:** Clark County agriculture and natural resources extension agent David Davis discusses food safety concerns for produce growers at a May 30<sup>th</sup> agriculture water quality field day at Angel Farms in Winchester.



Photos by Brett Wolff, UK



**At left:** Demonstrating how to sample irrigation water for testing.

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Davis continued a plasticulture program, using a borrowed mulch layer to help new growers lay mulch from 2013 to 2017. There were 14 growers that started using plasticulture during that time. “We found many of the producers had knowledge gaps. We created a formal mentorship program, where I worked with 14 startup market gardeners, until 2018.”

The Mentor Program started with off-season classroom sessions targeting the biggest knowledge gaps Davis and others observed in the new growers: Budget Planning for Success; Understanding the Seed Catalog; Finding Resources Needed for Producing Vegetables Using Black Plastic Mulch; and Planning for Integrated Pest Management in Small-Scale Vegetable Operations.

Two additional farms are now participating. “This season, it is more informal. I’m providing extension education to 14 gardeners that went through the program,” Davis said. “I think probably the biggest success of the Mentor Program was being able to help the growers learn how to learn

for themselves.” He noted only one farm from the program did not continue market gardening, “and that was because of a time constraint. I think the program helped them to understand the limits of their current farming operation.”

The growers still have access to plasticulture equipment, as the county in 2017 acquired a mulch layer for on-farm demonstration trial use. “Clark County growers can check it out as shared use equipment when it is not in use for plot installation,” Davis said. He thinks a new farm-to-school program, starting this fall, will create new educational needs that will build on the mentor program.

Davis said he is learning to help market gardeners position themselves for the long haul. “They really do need to learn to think beyond this season,” he said. Seed and crop selection, the kinds of inputs purchased (especially for disease management) and a long-term IPM plan all have a learning curve. “You also have to teach the budget side, how they can figure out before planting how much they might be able to make from the market garden,” he says.

# Seasonal vegetable issues

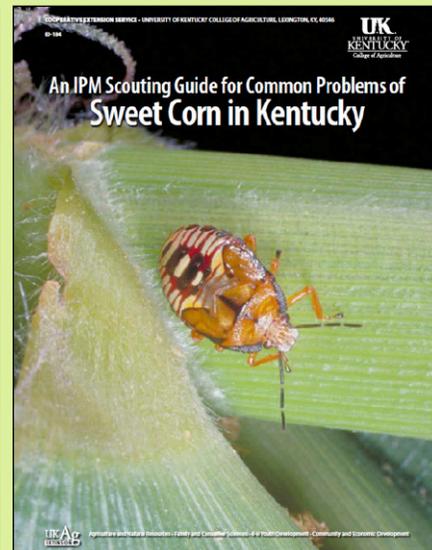
By Dr. Rachel Rudolph, Extension Vegetable Specialist

“What is wrong with my sweet corn?”

Here is sweet corn showing signs of zinc deficiency. It is distinguished by the yellow striping on the outer portion of the leaves, while the midvein remains green. Another characteristic is that the yellowing appears on the lower part of the leaves while the top part of the leaves remains green. Zinc is less available to the plant at a higher soil pH (greater than 6.5). It is important to get a soil test prior to planting in order to adjust the pH and soil nutrients according to the crop you plan to plant. In order to adjust the pH (raising or lowering), it takes approximately six months for lime or sulfur to take full effect after applying to the soil. Many nutrient deficiencies look similar. A foliar test is recommended to ensure proper diagnosis.



Photo at left taken June 20, 2019 by Wayne Kirby, Knox County ANR agent.



For more information on this and other issues in sweet corn, see ID-184, [An IPM Scouting Guide for Common Problems of Sweet Corn in Kentucky](#).

## Ginger and Turmeric profile, blueberry budgets among new, updated CCD resources

The Center for Crop Diversification released a new crop profile in June, Ginger and Turmeric (CCD-CP-138). The profile offers production and marketing information about ginger and turmeric for high tunnel production in Kentucky. This new profile is available on the CCD website at [http://www.uky.edu/ccd/sites/www.uky.edu/ccd/files/ginger\\_turmeric.pdf](http://www.uky.edu/ccd/sites/www.uky.edu/ccd/files/ginger_turmeric.pdf).

The CCD's blueberry budget publications, [Blueberry Cost and Return Estimates \(CCD-BG-2\)](#), [Highbush Blueberries, Kentucky Pick-Your-Own Marketing \(CCD-BG-3\)](#), and [Highbush Blueberries, Kentucky Wholesale/Retail Marketing \(CCD-BG-4\)](#) have been updated for 2019. Our crop profile on [Brussels Sprouts \(CCD-CP-89\)](#) has also been updated. Check out these and many other resources on the CCD website at [www.uky.edu/CCD](http://www.uky.edu/CCD).



University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

Center for Crop Diversification Crop Profile  
CCD-CP-138

### Ginger and Turmeric

Matt Ernst<sup>1</sup> and Kristi Durbin<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale Roscoe*) and turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) both have a long history of use in Asian, African and Caribbean cuisines. Fresh ginger is available year-round in the U.S. and Canada from produce wholesalers sourcing from global suppliers, and both are widely available in their dried, ground form that is produced from their underground rhizomes.

The U.S. ginger crop is mainly grown in Hawaii. Recently, some U.S. vegetable and greenhouse growers have added ginger and turmeric as high-value specialty crops to meet consumer demands for locally grown ingredients. Producers in the northeast have successfully produced ginger in high tunnels, and experience with ginger and turmeric production (through the 2018 season) indicates both crops may be adaptable to high tunnel production in Kentucky.



BABY GINGER

#### Marketing

Kentucky producers have focused on selling directly to consumers, using local market channels like farmers markets and community supported agriculture. A few producers also sell these specialty crops via wholesale marketing for restaurant chefs. Some food retailers focused on offering organic and local produce have reported sourcing ginger locally.

Local farmers market customers and CSA members will benefit from recipes and preparation suggestions for fresh ginger. Shelf life and storage considerations should be conveyed to customers, as the fresh “baby” ginger in its immature stage produced in high tunnels will have different requirements than the mature ginger that is available



at grocery stores. Turmeric producers should also provide use guidelines, as fresh turmeric is not commonly found in the marketplace. Common uses include using the vegetative tops of both plants to make teas, and both crops are used in juicing. Both rhizomes can also be dehydrated, pickled or candied.

Ginger and turmeric have received attention in the health and wellness product market, with turmeric attracting much recent interest. The FDA regulates how products may be marketed with respect to claims of potential health benefits. Farm marketers must understand the potential ramifications of making health claims when selling fresh produce crops, as associating these specific crops with health benefits violates food marketing regulations.

<sup>1</sup>Matt Ernst is an independent contractor with the Center for Crop Diversification.

<sup>2</sup>Kristi Durbin is a senior horticulturist in the University of Kentucky Department of Horticulture.

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Dr. Marion Simon welcomes attendees to the field day and 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary celebration of the Third Thursday Thing on June 20<sup>th</sup> at Kentucky State University's Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm in Frankfort.

Photo by Brett Wolff, UK

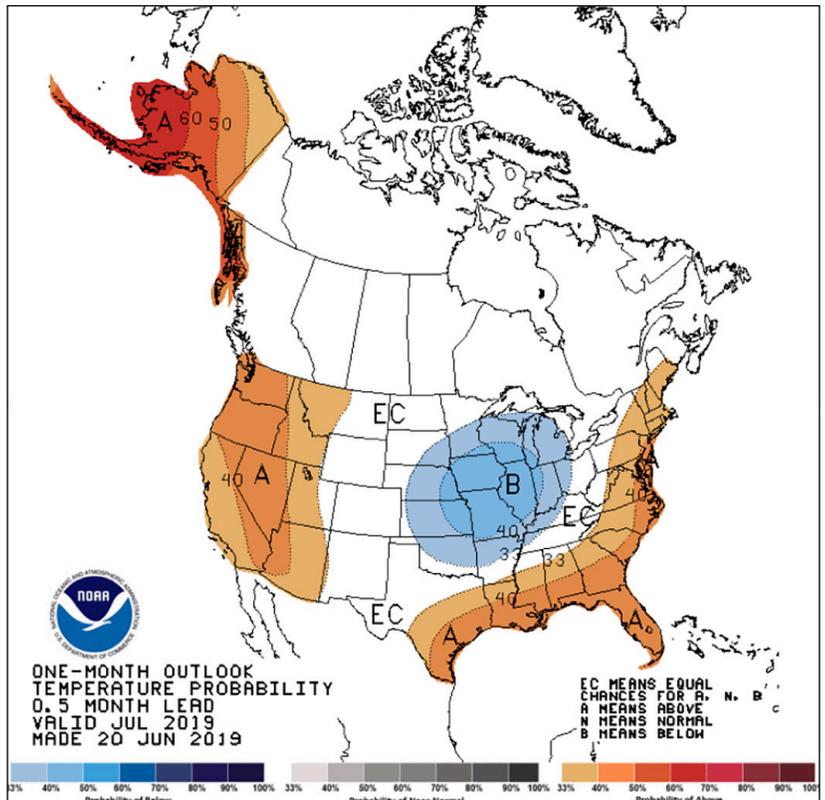


## Cooler-than-average weather ahead for parts of KY

By Joshua Knight, Sr. Extension Associate, Horticulture

The temperature probability map for July is predicting an above normal chance of cooler-than-average weather for the month. This deviation from normal temperatures is mostly confined to the western part of the commonwealth and along the Ohio River.

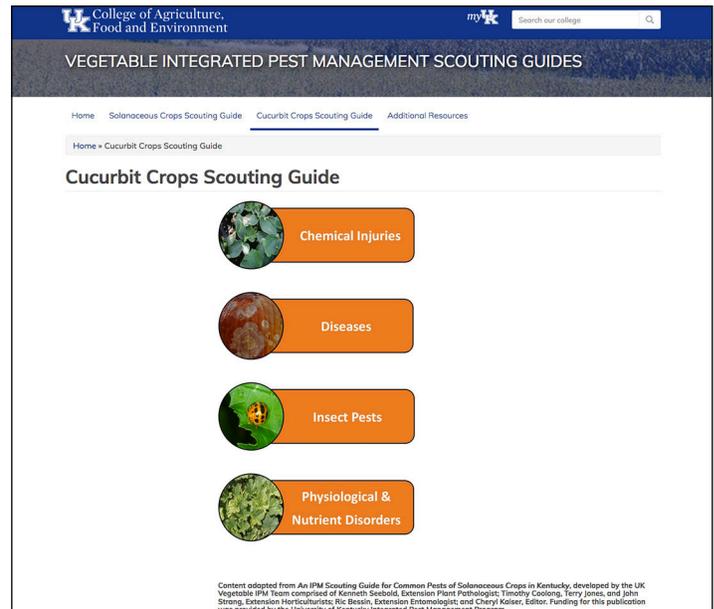
The above average rates of precipitation that have been lurking in the Midwest are predicted to continue in July and likely into August and September, though they do not quite reach into Kentucky. It should be noted that a climate report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Centers for Environmental Information indicated May was the second wettest month in the U.S. since recordkeeping started in 1895 (May 2015 was number one).



# New resource: Cucurbit Crops Scouting Guide website

By Kim Leonberger, Plant Pathology Extension Associate and Emily Pfeufer, Extension Plant Pathologist  
From the Kentucky Pest News e-newsletter

The publication *An IPM Scouting Guide for Common Problems of Cucurbit Crops in Kentucky* was first introduced in 2009 as an online PDF / paper version. To improve access to this important scouting guide, the [Veggie Scout website](#) was developed. The Cucurbit Crops Scouting Guide is a part of the Veggie Scout website and is now available for grower, agent and homeowner use. The website can be easily accessed from any phone, tablet, iPad or computer. This website provides users with the same information available in the scouting guide publication, but in a mobile-friendly format. The [Cucurbit Crops Scouting Guide](#) home page (shown



above) allows visitors to select a topic. Next, users can select from a menu of various diseases, pests or abiotic problems to obtain more information and view images.

# Census of Ag state, county profiles offer wealth of data

From *USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service*  
2017 Census of Agriculture State and County Profiles have been published. These two-page reports give a quick overview of agricultural activity in each county, including rank within the state and U.S. for selected data items. The reports include such information as the number of farms, average size of farms, total market value of products sold and per farm average market

value of products sold, number of farms by value of sales and by size, producer demographics, and much more. To see the files for Kentucky, visit [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online\\_Resources/County\\_Profiles/Kentucky/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Kentucky/index.php). To access files for additional states, go to [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full\\_Report/Census\\_by\\_State/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Census_by_State/index.php).

# IPM scouting guide for grapes released

From the *FruitFacts* newsletter

*An IPM Scouting Guide for Common Problems of Grape in Kentucky* (ID-254) was recently released and is available online at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/ag-comm/pubs/ID/ID254/ID254.pdf>. Printed copies will follow soon and should be available at local Cooperative Extension Service offices. This guide, like the apple, bramble and strawberry guides, has a heavy emphasis on photographs and is intended to help growers identify common disease, insect, weed, wildlife and abiotic problems as well as provide management information. The next IPM guide in this series will be for peaches. This manual is the result of efforts of the University of Kentucky Fruit Integrated Pest Management team.

# Thanks for reading!

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