



Ag NEWS

MERRIMACK COUNTY EXTENSION AGRICULTURE NEWS

SPRING 2007

Summer Twilight Meetings

I'd like to thank Bill Lord for getting the 2007 apple season off to a great start. In the short time Bill has been back on the Extension payroll, he's already spent 2 days doing site visits in Merrimack County and presented at 3 twilight meetings! Our thanks go to Hackleboro Orchards, Carter Hill Orchard and Meadow Ledge Farm for hosting 3 well attended and **fun** twilight meetings this spring.

I'm still putting together a list of twilight meetings for this summer but I'll share what I have in the works so far. You can find out more about these meetings by:

- Checking our county agriculture web page at www.extension.unh.edu/agric/turf/turfipm.htm up to 3 weeks before the program.
- Calling us at 225-5505.
- You'll get a flyer in the mail if you're on my mailing list for the commodity area the meeting is about.

Articles written by Cooperative Extension Agriculture Resource Educator, Sadie Puglisi. Contact her at 603-225-5505, ext. 323 or email her at sadie.puglisi@unh.edu.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Upcoming Summer Twilight Meetings

Pasture Walk, July 25th, from 6 pm - 8 pm, at the Johnson's Bros. Farm in Pittsfield: Learn about weed management, weed biology and what the weeds in your pasture can tell you about your soil.

Woodman Farm Twilight Meeting, August 8th, in Durham: Each year the Extension Specialists invite us to see their research projects and give us an update on the latest research developments from Durham.

Greenhouse Twilight Meeting, August 2nd, time TBA, at DS Cole in Loudon: Dosatron maintenance, repairs and assembly. Speaker: Lela Kelly, Vice President of Dosatron International, Inc.

Landscaping by the Water's Edge, August 9th, 6:30 p.m., at St. Paul's School in Concord. We'll walk the grounds of the beautiful St. Paul's campus and talk about ways to create landscape that is environmentally sound. Topics to be covered are site assessment, erosion control, buffers, basic design, and turf maintenance.

Merrimack County Vegetable Twilight Meeting, August 14th, time and location TBA. Join UNH Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, Becky Grube, and Plant Health Specialist, Cheryl Smith, for an update on vegetable production management and disease control.

Winter Project Wrap Up



As part of the **Landscaping at the Water's Edge** program, we have published a manual that covers topics such as, an in-

roduction to how we impact the watershed we live in, landscape design basics, buffer zones, site analysis for erosion and leaching potential, plant selection and low input lawn care.

Books are available for sale from the publications department at extension.unh.edu/Pubs/Pubs.htm or by calling 603-862-1564.

New Projects for the 2007 Growing Season!



I have received grant funding from the New England Floriculture, Inc. to survey prices of garden mums in New Hampshire. Pricing a product is a big challenge in the horticulture industry, especially in a landscape as diverse as New Hampshire. By surveying retailers in six counties in New Hampshire and evaluating the prices and factors that are taken into consideration when determining price, we hope to be able to construct a decision-making tool for retailers. Growers may find that they can increase their price and profitability on what they currently consider to be a staple but low-profit product.

Eustoma Grandiflora Research Continues

The New England Floriculture, Inc. has also awarded us monies to continue our research on *Eustoma grandiflora*. I will not be doing a separate trial in Merrimack County this year, but will be spending more efforts on the project down at the Woodman Farm in Durham. Details of this year's project will be forthcoming. Check out the findings from last year's trial at Spring Ledge Farm on the county agriculture website: www.extension.unh.edu/Counties/Merrimack/Agriculture.htm.

IPM Website and CD Now Available! Check it out!



My Integrated Pest Management for Turfgrass web page is completely *complete* at: www.extension.unh.edu/agric/turf/turfipm.htm and also available by CD from our publication office as well. Cost of the CDs are \$5.00 to cover shipping. The information on the CD is the same as on the website, but the CD comes with downloadable software and is great for those that do not have high speed internet. Also, the format of the CD makes for easy printed fact sheets to share with your friends and neighbors.

Sustainable Weed Management in Newly Established Garlic Beds



Another interesting research project that will be conducted this year is Sustainable Weed Management in Newly Estab-

lished Garlic Beds. This three year project will test various cover crop rotation schedules for weed management in garlic beds. This will be an intensive schedule of seeding cover crops, plowing them under and reseeding one or two other cover crops before the fall planting time. For a complete table of our three year rotation, visit the county agriculture website at: www.extension.unh.edu/Counties/Merrimack/Agriculture.htm.

Timely Topic



If you're growing floriculture crops or greenhouse tomatoes in soil-less media, you probably have had a question or two about your water quality.

Did you know that the pH of your water does not affect the pH of your media? It's actually the alkalinity of your water determines the pH. Alkalinity refers to the capacity of your water to buffer acids. If you have water with a high alkalinity, above 150 ppm CaCo₃, then it will take a lot of acid to change the pH of your media. If your water has low alkalinity, below 60 ppm CaCo₃, then using acidic fertilizers may lower

the pH of your media. Acidic fertilizers are those with the ammonium or urea forms of nitrogen, or water soluble fertilizers 21-7-7, 20-20-20, and 20-10-20. A common basic fertilizer is 13-2-13 with calcium and magnesium (sometimes called "cal mag"). The 17-5-17 Ca Mg is neutral.

Why does this matter?

The pH of your media determines the availability of micronutrients to your plant. Some plants are more susceptible to lower pH than others. If you've been fertilizing as recommended but you still have yellowing leaves, you may have a pH problem.

What should I do?

Get your water tested so you know the alkalinity. We have a test kit here in the office, call us and we'll come test it, or you can send away to have it tested in the lab for six dollars. Call us to have a form mailed to you or print one from the web at:

http://ceadmin.unh.edu/soils/fees/soils_fees_home.cfm?review=5.

Your Cooperative Extension Office is On the Air!

Peter St. James from WTPL has invited UNH Cooperative Extension to go live on the air with him every Monday at 8:15 a.m. Listen in and see what's happening around the County and around the State.

Don't have time to listen on Mondays? That's okay! UNHCE of Merrimack County now has their own radio show and you can listen to it whenever you want! Just log on to our website at: <http://extension.unh.edu/Counties/Merrimack/Merrimack.htm> and you'll see a link to our Podcasts. Podcast is just a term for any audio recording on the internet that you can subscribe to if you'd like. Our podcasts have fast facts, timely tips, a calendar of events and a featured story of the week.

Merrimack County Web Page Overhaul!!

Check out the new look! We've made our webpage more accessible with more information about twilight meetings, conferences, research projects and little goings-on around the county. In just one click, you'll be able to register for programs and even pay for registration or books with a credit card. I will update our Agriculture page to reflect current programs and projects. This will make it easier for you to learn about what is happening at your County Extension office and give some input to how we can help you better. Check out the podcasts and subscribe to have them downloaded for free as they come out monthly.

Find us at:
<http://extension.unh.edu/Counties/Merrimack/Merrimack.htm>



Merrimack County Office
315 Daniel Webster Highway
Boscawen, NH 03303