

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
August 2013

Led by agricultural and resource management agent **Bill Sciarappa**, Monmouth County Cooperative Extension staff is conducting Solvita Soil Respiration tests on farms in the county. The Solvita test assesses the biological soil health of farmlands by measuring the biological nitrogen in soil – a key factor in plant nutrition, growth and health. The county purchased a Solvita system and staff was trained by **Stephanie Murphy**, director of the Rutgers Soil Testing Lab. The system will be used to survey biological status of county soils, monitor cropping techniques for effects on soil health, estimating potential N mineralization for adjusting fertilizer recommendations, and determining any potential cost savings.

The Rutgers NJAES Agritourism Working Group began working with a group of farmers in 2012 to revive the New Jersey Farmer Direct Marketing Association (NJFDMA), now led by President John Hauser. **Brian Schilling**, agricultural and resource management agents **Bill Hlubik**, **Michelle Infante-Casella**, **Steve Komar**, **Bill Bamka**, **Peter Nitzsche**, **Jack Rabin**, **Rick VanVranken**, **Jenny Carleo**, and staff members **Meredith Melendez** and **Lucas Marxen** have worked for the past year and a half providing resources, assisting in hosting educational events and updating the website www.visitnjfarms.org. The latest event was held in July in Gloucester County at Duffield's Farm Market. At this co-sponsored event with Rutgers NJAES and NJFDMA, 36 farmers attended to learn and network.

USDA's Regional Climate Hubs will deliver science-based knowledge and practical information to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners within each region of the United States to support decision-making related to climate change. These hubs are needed to maintain and strengthen agricultural production, natural resource management, and rural economic development under increasing climate variability. The hubs will build capacity within USDA to deliver information and guidance on technologies and risk management practices at regional and local scales. The land grant institutions will be integral parts of the Regional Climate Hubs. Information was provided to the USDA-NRCS New Jersey Office that was incorporated into the Northeast Regional Hub proposal on behalf of Rutgers University as a participating partner in the regional hub for the Northeast.

The Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science has conducted evaluations of organic alternatives to glyphosate (e.g., Roundup), especially for trim sprays on paved areas, sidewalks, skin surfaces on ball fields, etc. The results indicate that these alternative products are short term "burn-down" products that have the ability to kill small immature plants. Large perennial plants, while looking sick to dead soon after being sprayed, start to re-grow approximately a week later. Therefore, **Jim Murphy**, specialist in turf management only recommends these alternative products for trimming applications on immature (very young, small plants) vegetation. These burn-down products are best used on paved areas, sidewalk cracks, etc. starting early in April when weeds are very small (immature) and will need to be re-applied at a frequency that matches the environmental conditions which stimulate emergence of new weeds. More information is available from the factsheet "Management of Turf Using 'Low-Impact' Pesticides at <http://turf.rutgers.edu/newsandevents/lowimpactpesticides.pdf>.

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Of Interest:

In an ongoing effort to protect bees and other pollinators, the U.S. EPA has developed new pesticide labels that prohibit use of some neonicotinoid pesticide products where bees are present. The new labels will have a bee advisory box and icon with information on routes of exposure and spray drift precautions. This affects products containing the neonicotinoids imidacloprid, dinotefuran, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam. Regarding this initiative, **Anne Nielsen**, specialist in fruit entomology, states “Honey bees and native bees are an essential part of our ecosystems and our food supply. The new labels for the select neonicotinoid insecticide products will assist growers in reducing negative impacts to bees foraging on crops. It is only part of the solution and all insecticides must be used with caution to protect beneficial insects.”

Events:

Annual Snyder Farm Open House and Tomato Tasting, August 28, 3:00 – 8:00 pm, Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm, 140 Locust Grove Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867. The event includes the very popular tasting of over 60 heirloom and hybrid varieties of beefsteak, plum, cherry, and grape tomatoes. Other highlights include tasting of apples and peaches from the NJAES Tree Fruit Breeding Program along with varieties of basil and honey. Wagon tours of the farm's research plots will be held throughout the event. Contact Joanne Stevely, 908-730-9419, ext. 3501 or RSVP on-line at snyderfarm.rutgers.edu/tomatoes.html

Open Space Pace, September 21, beginning at 10:00 a.m. with a parade of 100 horses from Freehold Hall of Records to Freehold Raceway, Monmouth County. <http://www.openspacepace.org/#events>

Visit our Rutgers NJAES online resources:

Vegetable Crops Online Resource Center: <http://njveg.rutgers.edu>

Jersey Vegetable Crops Ag Updates: <http://jerseyvegupdates.blogspot.com>

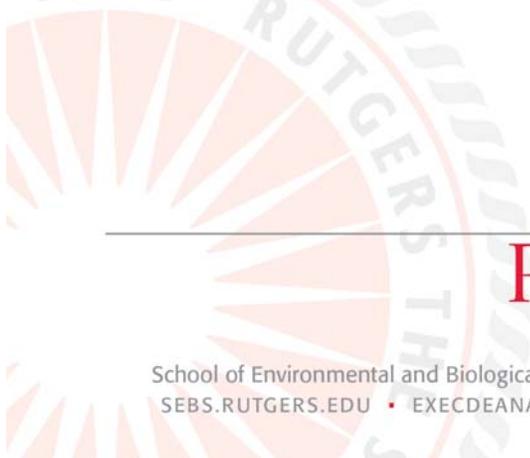
Fruit Ag Updates: <http://jerseyfruitupdates.blogspot.com>

Field & Forage Crops Nutrient Management Ag Updates:

<http://fieldforagecropsnutrientmanagement.blogspot.com>

Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe: <http://njsustainingfarms.rutgers.edu>

What's in Season from the Garden State: <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/archive.html>



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