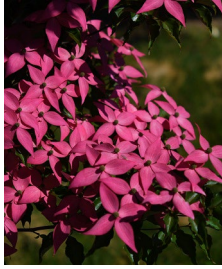


A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
March 2022



Scarlet Fire® Dogwood

Developed at Rutgers, the Scarlet Fire® dogwood has been named a Gold Medal Plant by the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society (PHS). Introduced in 2017 and created in part by **Thomas Molnar**, associate professor of plant biology, Scarlet Fire® is one of six plants included in the 2022 PHS Gold Medal Program - Outstanding Plants for the Mid-Atlantic Garden. In addition to disease resistance, it is the first dark-pink blooming kousa dogwood, with blooms lasting 6-8 weeks. Molnar and his predecessor, **Elwin Orton**, professor emeritus of plant biology and pathology with whom Molnar worked as a graduate student, were striving to develop a kousa dogwood with deep pink coloring. Through cross breeding, Molnar and **John Capik**, field researcher in the Department of Plant Biology, were able to achieve the color they wanted and grow a dogwood that blooms after just two years. The [PHS Gold Medal Program](#) winners are selected by a group of nursery owners, horticulturists, expert gardeners, and professional growers, who look for “the best performing and most beautiful.” Scarlet Fire® was judged on ease of cultivation, multiple seasons of interest, commercial availability, appropriateness for the Mid-Atlantic region, and value to wildlife. [Scarlet Fire Dogwood Created at Rutgers Takes Home Gold](#)

NJAES has launched a new website for its comprehensive report on [White-Tailed Deer and the Hidden Costs to Farmers’ Livelihoods](#). Between October 2020 and March 2021, researchers surveyed a group of 27 farmers who faced increasing numbers of white-tailed deer and associated impacts on their farms. Building on previous NJAES research on direct financial losses from deer eating crops, this new case study provides information on “hidden costs” associated with deer, such as environmental impacts, safety concerns, abandoning fields, not being able to grow preferred crops, having to change crop rotations, the need for increased use of fertilizers and herbicides, time and money spent on deer management, and the emotional toll it can take. For the cohort of 27 farmers, the estimated impact of deer damage in 2019 was nearly \$1.3 million. Farmer recommendations for enhancing deer management, challenges related to public awareness, residential development surrounding farms, and management on adjacent public and private lands are also addressed.

Of Interest

The 2022 Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Meeting was held virtually on March 11 and covered topics on commercial production of vegetables and specialty crops. The South Jersey Tree Fruit Twilight Meeting was held March 22 at the RCE of Gloucester County office.

Rutgers 4-H sent a delegation of 30 teens and six chaperones to the National 4-H Agri-Science Summit, March 10-13 in Bethesda, MD. The summit brings together teen agriculture and science leaders from across the country to focus on learning about and solving agri-science issues that impact communities and the economy.



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Cranberry research and extension workers from across North America meet every other year to share research information at the North American Cranberry Research and Extension Workers (NACREW) Conference. Attendees of the conference represent the growing regions of MA, WI, WA, NJ, OR, Quebec, British Columbia, and New Brunswick. Most attendees are from universities, but others are affiliated with government research branches, industry support groups, grower companies, and handler organizations. This year, the 2022 NACREW Conference will be hosted in New Jersey by the P.E. Marucci Center, August 15–18. [NACREW 2022 - Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry & Cranberry Research & Extension.](#)

The following new and updated publications are available:

E372 [EPA's Worker Protection Standard Respiratory and Recordkeeping Requirements for Agricultural Employers of Pesticide Handlers \(Rutgers NJAES\).](#) **Hastings, P.**

[Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey, 2022 \(Rutgers NJAES\).](#) **Besancon, T., Oudemans, P., Pavlis, G., Polk, D., and Rodriguez-Saona, C.**

Phytophthora blight is one of the most economically important diseases in pepper, tomato, and cucurbit production in New Jersey. For the past three decades, Rutgers has evaluated new bell pepper cultivars and breeding lines for their resistance to *P. capsici* in field trials at the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center (RAREC). Rutgers also evaluates each cultivar for their fruit quality characteristics (e.g., color, wall thickness, number of lobes, and development of 'silvering'). Because of increasing reports of [bacterial leaf spot and copper resistance](#) in recent years, bell peppers growers in New Jersey should consider cultivars with X10R resistance and phytophthora blight resistance. The bell pepper variety and bacterial leaf spot reports for 2021 are now available: [Rutgers-Pepper-Phytophthora-Blight-Final-Report-2021.pdf](#) and [Rutgers-Bacterial-Leaf-Spot-Final-Report-2021.pdf](#).

The paper, [Tropical spinach production for leaf and grain in New Jersey](#), was published in *HortiDaily* on February 21. Findings by researchers **Albert Ayeni**, retired ethnic crop specialist, graduate student **Jennifer Paul**, and student interns **Maryann Zielinski** and **Lizett Jimenez** are that African/American and Asian tropical spinach selections adapt well to New Jersey growing conditions from May - October.

Events

The [Rutgers Junior Breeder Livestock Symposium](#) will be held on Rutgers George H. Cook campus in New Brunswick, March 26, 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

South Jersey Vegetable Growers Meeting, April 5, 6:30-9 p.m., E. Vineland Fire Hall, Vineland. Contact: vanvranken@njaes.rutgers.edu, wkline@njaes.rutgers.edu, or minfante@njaes.rutgers.edu.

North Jersey Tree Fruit and Vegetable Twilight Meetings: [Meeting I, March 29](#), 4:30-7:30, Snyder Research Farm Pittstown, NJ; Meeting II, April 19, 4:30-7:30, Alstede Farms Chester, NJ; Meeting III, May 24, 4:30-7:30, Phillips Farm Milford, NJ. Contact: kfrey@co.hunterdon.nj.us or call 908-788-1338.

