



OCTOBER 2022

Weed Management for Beginning Organic Farmers



New and beginning organic farmers participate in the first field walk at Rancocas Creek Farm in Southampton, NJ.

The "Ecology Based Weed Management for Beginning Organic Farmers" project, funded by a 2019-2022 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, has culminated in the development of five weed management fact sheets and decision tools for growers related to non-herbicide management practices. **Thierry Besancon**, NJAES specialty crop weed extension specialist, and **Meredith Melendez**, RCE agricultural county agent (Mercer), developed resources on Canada thistle, hairy galinsoga, large crabgrass, smooth and redroot pigweed, and yellow nutsedge. These weeds were previously

identified by the target audience as the priority weed species for control in their specialty crop production areas. Each fact sheet has a companion video that is available through the [Rutgers NJAES YouTube weed management playlist](#). To more broadly disseminate these available NJAES resources, two field walks were held for new and beginning farmers along with a weed identification tutorial and a discussion of weed management strategies.

New Christmas Tree & Conifer Nursery Crops Advisory Launched



Colorado Spruce showing symptoms of undesirable discoloration of older, inner needles. *Photo Credit: Steven K. Rettke, RCE.*

Rutgers Cooperative Extension county agents **Timothy Waller** (Cumberland) and **William Erickson** (Monmouth) recently responded to the needs of an important and underserved commodity group by launching a new edition of the [Rutgers Plant and Pest Advisory, focused on Christmas tree and conifer nursery crops](#). The agents worked with Tim Dunne, executive director of the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association, to add more than 200 new subscribers to the Christmas Tree database, which has grown through organic subscription since its launch on Sept. 19. The launch was facilitated by **Bonnie Wasielewski** (web designer/developer, SEBS/NJAES Office of Communications and Marketing), under the guidance of advisory editors, and RCE county agents **Richard VanVranken** (Atlantic) and **Peter Nitzsche** (Morris). This

new publication will address commodity requests for IPM alerts, cultural practice guidance, detailed topic education, and news within the industry.

Twilight Meeting and Field Tour at Cream Ridge



Bill Errickson discusses low-input ornamental plants with local growers.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County hosted a free twilight meeting and field tour at the Rutgers Specialty Crop Research and Extension Center in Cream Ridge on September 20. Approximately 50 local growers attended the event, which featured in-field presentations on some of the current specialty crop research projects that are being conducted at the center, along with the RU Ready to Farm: Beginner Farmer Training Program field plots. Presenters included **William Errickson**, RCE agricultural county agent (Monmouth); **Brendon Pearsall**, senior program coordinator (Middlesex) and Rutgers Beginner Farmer Program coordinator; and **Chelsea Abegg**, soils and

plant technician, RCE. Topics included “Integrated Pest Management for Beginning and Experienced Farmers,” “Low Input Native and Ornamental Plant Trials,” “Growing Ginger and Turmeric in Moveable High Tunnels,” and “Honey Bee, What’s in Your Pollen? Residuals and Pollen Diversity in Relation to Colony Health.” The program provided continuing education credits for pesticide license recertification and was followed by the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture meeting, which was also hosted at Cream Ridge.

Of Interest

The following new and updated fact sheets and bulletins are available on [NJAES Publications](#):

[FS1350: Redroot and Smooth Pigweed Life Cycle Disruptions for Effective Control in Specialty Crops](#)
Melendez, M. and **Besancon, T.**

[E371: Livestock and Poultry Veterinary Care Services Series, Part I: What Kind of Vet Do I Need? How Do I Find One?](#) **Bravo, M.**

Grants

Ning Zhang, professor, Department of Plant Biology and Department of Biochemistry & Microbiology, was awarded a 4-year, \$750,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for the project, “[Fungi in the pine barrens ecosystem - biodiversity systematics and function.](#)”

Thomas Grothues, associate research professor, Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences, was awarded \$1,089,530 from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management for the project, “Sand ridge structuring of fish habitat function on the Continental Shelf of New Jersey.” Grothues is the research coordinator at the [Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve](#), which is managed by NJAES.

Events

[Turfgrass Disease Management course](#), offered by NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education (OCPE), Oct. 27, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Joe Conzano at joe.canzano@rutgers.edu or 848-932-7317.

[Best Management Practices for Tree Care](#), offered online by OCPE, Nov. 4., 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To register, contact Joe Conzano at joe.canzano@rutgers.edu or 848-932-7317.