Rutgers Research to Develop a new Blueberry Variety Enters Final Phase

Researchers at the Rutgers’ Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension in Chatsworth, NJ, are getting close to identifying a new blueberry variety that can produce a sweeter, firmer fruit for Garden State growers. The decade-long research project will move into its final trial this season and is being led by Gina Sideli, assistant professor in the Department of Plant Biology, who directs the center’s breeding program. When that trial culminates in about five years, Rutgers hopes to have a new and improved blueberry cultivar to bring to market. New Jersey produces between 35 and 45 million pounds of blueberries, on average, a year to serve the densely populated Northeast.

New Jersey Food System Dashboard Launched

New Jersey residents have a one-stop source for information on the different aspects of the state’s food system, thanks to a new tool designed to build capacity in community non-profits, municipal departments and grassroots organizations to support data-driven decision-making. Funded by a one-year grant from Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health, this public tool was co-developed by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Department of Family and Community Health Sciences, NJ Food Democracy Collaborative, community partners from Newark, New Brunswick and Camden, and the Environmental Analysis and Communications Group, part of the Center for Urban Policy Research at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers.

Rutgers Entomologist Seeks Environmentally Friendly Ways to Thwart Crop Damage

In her role as extension specialist in tree fruit and associate professor in the Department of Entomology, Anne Nielsen’s goal is to protect the natural world by developing sustainable management practices. She focuses on invasive species, including stink bugs and spotted lanternflies and their effects on fruit crops. In 2003, Nielsen became the first doctoral student in the U.S. to study the brown marmorated stink bug, which was beginning its ascendency as an invasive species notoriously damaging to crops. Working with her mentor, Rutgers entomologist George Hamilton, Nielsen traced the stink bug’s life cycle and origins. By the time the stink bug populations exploded in 2009-2010, Nielsen and Hamilton were in a unique position to advise farmers on countermeasures.
Of Interest

The following updated fact sheets are available on NJAES Publications:

FS349: Mounting, Dismounting, and Riding Horses Safely  
Malinowski, K.

FS716: Stress Management for Equine Athletes  
Malinowski, K.

FS788: Equine Welfare: A New World For Equine Athletes  
Malinowski, K.

FS1176: Tips On Buying Your First Horse  
Malinowski, K.

Collaborative NJ FoodTech 2024 Connects Industry Stakeholders

Rutgers Food Innovation Center, New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and Middlesex County, collaborated to host the New Jersey FoodTech 2024 Conference, held on June 26 at the Rutgers College Avenue Student Center in New Brunswick. The conference, which was inaugurated last year to great success, drew close to 250 attendees this year. The event is designed to promote the growth of New Jersey’s food technology sector by building awareness of its strength in food innovation. In addition to helping to grow NJ’s food technology sector, the FoodTech conference also highlighted business retention resource and opportunities in the state.

Up-to-date, Science-based Horticulture Advice from Rutgers Experts is a Phone Call Away

Are weeds conquering your victory garden? Have critters turned it into a dine-and-dash buffet? Sound advice is available for New Jersey residents through the Rutgers Master Gardener program, which has approximately 1,200 volunteers and maintains helplines for 16 of the state’s 21 counties. Rutgers master gardeners are trained volunteers who support RCE in its mission to provide horticulture programs and information to the public. Monthly, there are thousands of contacts to the Master Gardener helplines throughout the state.

New Hires

Rachel Tansey is the new Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) educator in Monmouth County, effective July 1. She is a key part of FCHS' wellness efforts, and will concentrate on community health education, wellness and self-care, nutritious eating, and healthy lifestyles, with an emphasis on wellness in the workplace.

Meredith Taylor is the new FCHS educator in Middlesex County, effective July 1. Her focus is on Community Food Systems and will support education, outreach, and scholarship in Food Justice and Urban Agriculture along with building local and healthy food systems in underserved communities.

Kathleen Cullinen is the new FCHS educator in Ocean County, effective July 15. Her focus is on healthy aging efforts within Rutgers Cooperative Extension, supporting education, outreach, and scholarship in community nutrition, health and wellness.

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.