

VEGETABLE CROPS HOTLINE

A newsletter for commercial vegetable growers prepared by the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service.

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From the Editor's Desk

(Petrus Langenhoven, plangenh@purdue.edu, (765) 496-7955)

Dear Valued VCH Readers,

Welcome to this week's edition of the Vegetable Crops Hotline!

As we move deeper into the growing season, this week's newsletter brings you essential insights to help navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead. From understanding what drives farm decision-making to managing the unpredictable weather patterns we've been experiencing, we're covering the topics that matter most to your operation.

Spring's variable conditions continue to keep growers on their toes, and we're here to help you stay informed and prepared. Whether you're dealing with early-season pest pressures, considering conservation practices, or planning for the seasons ahead, this edition provides practical, research-backed guidance from Purdue Extension and our network of specialists.

We're also excited to highlight opportunities for you to shape future programming and connect with fellow growers through upcoming conferences and training programs. Your voice and experience drive the conversations that benefit our entire

agricultural community.

Take a few minutes to explore this week's articles - from the latest producer survey insights to hands-on pest management strategies. As always, we're committed to bringing you the timely, actionable information you need to make informed decisions for your farming operation.

Growers and Purdue Extension Educators

Your input and expertise make this newsletter a truly useful resource. If you have hot topics you'd like us to cover, success stories to share, or questions for our Extension specialists, please get in touch with us at plangenh@purdue.edu or contact the specialist directly. We also welcome high-quality photos of pest issues, unusual symptoms, or innovative production practices you've implemented on your farm.

Website Links in Newsletter Articles

We frequently include links to websites or online publications. If you are unable to access these resources, please don't hesitate to contact your local Purdue Extension office or us to request a hard copy of the information.

Midwest Vegetable Production Guide

The 2025 Midwest Vegetable Production guide is now available for growers to visit online at mwveguide.org, or you can download and print a guide from your computer at mwveguide.org/guide. The guide can also be purchased for \$15 per copy. Contact your Extension Office or Stephen Meyers (slmeyer@purdue.edu) directly to buy a copy.

Midwest Vegetable Trial Reports

Are you still considering purchasing vegetable seeds? The [Midwest Vegetable Trial Reports](#) feature many articles to help you make an informed decision. The resource also hosts research results related to production.

Best regards,

Petrus Langenhoven
Clinical Assistant Professor and Vegetable Extension Specialist
Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture
Purdue University

Understanding Farm Decision-Making: Insights from the 2024-2025 Producer Survey

(Maria Marshall, mimarsha@purdue.edu), (Petrus Langenhoven, plangenh@purdue.edu, (765) 496-7955) & (Renee Wiatt, renewiatt@purdue.edu)



Small and medium-sized vegetable farms face unique challenges balancing profitability with sustainable production practices and food safety requirements. To better understand how these farmers navigate complex decision-making processes, the Soil to Market Team—comprising Maria Marshall, Renee Wiatt, Petrus Langenhoven, Betty Feng, and Nathan Shoaf—conducted a comprehensive survey of 500 small and medium-sized farmers across the United States during 2024-2025. This research, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture, focuses on holistic farmer decision-making processes.

This article series presents key findings from the survey, offering insights that can help both growers and Extension educators better understand the interconnected nature of farm planning. These findings aim to support more profitable and sustainable vegetable farming operations by examining the relationship between strategic planning and farm performance.

The Connected Farm: How Growers Integrate Practices from Soil to Market

It is important for farmers to have thought about their production and marketing plans before the season begins. In fact, our survey results show that 99% of farmers had a seasonal production plan, 78% had a seasonal marketing plan, and 68% had an updated business plan. However, production and marketing are not mutually exclusive strategies on a farm and should be integrated. In other words, your market may determine what you produce and what and how you farm may determine your market.

We asked farmers to what extent their seasonal production and marketing plans were integrated. The majority stated a moderate amount to a great deal, with only 8% stating a little to not at all. We also asked farmers to what extent (1= not at all and 5= a great deal) various production and marketing practices affect different steps in the soil to market process. The results shed light on how farm management decisions create ripple effects throughout production systems, revealing that successful vegetable operations require integrated thinking that connects soil health practices to market demands.

Cover Crops and Resource Management

Figure 1 shows that cover cropping significantly influences both irrigation and fertilizer management on most farms. Nearly two-thirds of growers (63%) report that cover crops affect their

irrigation practices to some degree, with 43% indicating a moderate to significant impact. This influence likely reflects cover crops’ ability to improve soil water retention and reduce irrigation needs. Cover crops offer substantial benefits for water management by creating deeper water penetration pathways, minimizing surface water loss, and enhancing the soil’s structural capacity to store moisture effectively. The water conservation advantages must be balanced against the crops’ own water consumption, with the overall irrigation impact varying based on environmental conditions, species selection, and harvest timing decisions. Successful implementation requires farmers to match cover crop varieties and management strategies to their specific regional weather patterns, soil characteristics, and precipitation levels to optimize water conservation outcomes.

The relationship between cover crops and fertilizer use is even more pronounced, with 68.6% of growers reporting a little to a great of influence. This connection demonstrates how soil-building practices translate directly into input cost savings. However, roughly one-third of farmers stated cover cropping had no effect on their use of irrigation (37%) or fertilizer (31%).

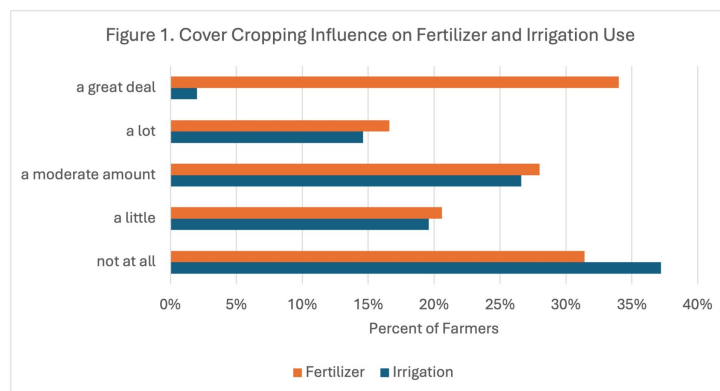


Figure 1. Cover Cropping Influence on Fertilizer and Irrigation Use

Compost as a System Driver

Compost emerges as an influential practice, as shown in Figure 2, affecting multiple aspects of farm operations. An impressive 96% of growers report that compost use influences their irrigation decisions to some extent, with 64% experiencing moderate to major effects. This strong relationship reflects compost’s role in improving soil structure, water-holding capacity, and overall soil health. Compost significantly reduces irrigation needs by improving soil structure and water retention, allowing soil to act like a sponge that absorbs and holds moisture more effectively. The organic matter in compost enhances water infiltration while reducing surface runoff, meaning plants have access to water for longer periods and require less frequent watering. Additionally, compost enriches soil with nutrients that promote healthier plant growth and more efficient water uptake, further minimizing the need for supplemental irrigation.

The fertilizer connection is equally strong, with 96% of growers noting some influence of compost on fertilizer use. More than one-third (34%) report major effects, highlighting the value of compost as both a nutrient source and a foundation for reducing synthetic inputs.

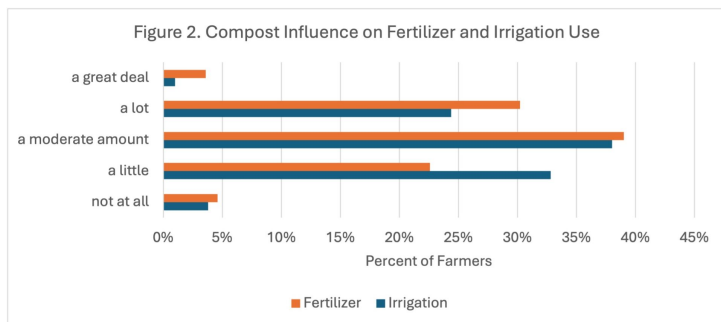


Figure 2. Compost Influence on Fertilizer and Irrigation Use

demonstrates how market demands shape everything from variety selection to harvest timing.

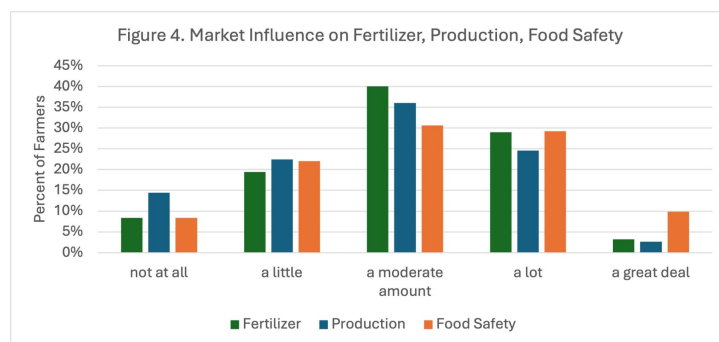


Figure 4. Market Influence on Fertilizer, Production, Food Safety

Food Safety as an Integrating Factor

Food safety planning serves as another potential integration point, influenced by multiple production decisions (Figure 3). The source of compost affects food safety planning for 90% of growers, reflecting heightened awareness of pathogen risks and regulatory requirements around organic amendments.

Irrigation systems also significantly influence food safety planning, with 89% of growers reporting some connection. This relationship has grown increasingly important as water quality and application methods become central to food safety protocols.

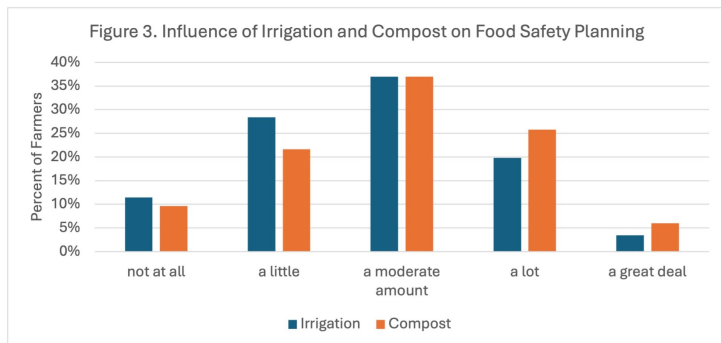


Figure 3. Influence of Irrigation and Compost on Food Safety Planning

Market Forces Shape Production Decisions

The survey reveals that market considerations influence production practices, creating a clear soil-to-market connection (Figure 4). Nearly three-quarters of growers (72%) report that their intended market affects fertilizer use, with 32% stating that it affected their use a lot to a great deal. This suggests that premium markets may drive increased investment in the use of specific soil fertility amendments to meet quality expectations.

Market influence extends beyond soil fertility management. Over 69% of growers indicate that market considerations affect their food safety planning, with 39% reporting moderate to significant effects. This connection reflects the reality that different markets have varying food safety requirements, from direct sales to large retail chains.

The market-production system relationship is even stronger, with 86% of growers reporting some market influence on their overall production approach. Only 14% stated that their market did not affect their production system. This comprehensive influence

Implications for Growers

These findings underscore several key principles for successful vegetable production:

- The interconnected nature of farm decisions means that changes in one area create opportunities or challenges in others. Growers who consider these connections can maximize synergies and avoid unintended consequences.
- Both cover cropping and composting influence irrigation efficiency and fertilizer needs, suggesting that investments in soil health can reduce other input costs while supporting production goals.
- The strong influence of market considerations on production practices highlights the importance of understanding customer requirements and building production systems that can meet diverse market demands.
- Rather than managing irrigation, fertility, and food safety as separate concerns, successful growers coordinate these practices to achieve multiple objectives simultaneously.

As vegetable production faces increasing pressure to balance productivity, profitability, and sustainability, the integration of practices from soil to market becomes increasingly critical. The survey data suggests that the most successful operations will be those that view their farms as interconnected systems where soil health investments support both production efficiency and market success.

For growers looking to optimize their operations, the data points toward focusing on practices with multiple benefits: cover crops that reduce both irrigation and fertilizer needs, compost systems that improve soil health while meeting food safety requirements, and production approaches that align soil management with market opportunities. Farmers should think beyond individual practices to consider how each management decision supports or constrains others, creating systems that are both resilient and responsive to market demands.

Funding Acknowledgement

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Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and should not be construed to represent any official USDA or U.S. Government determination or policy.

Insect Spotlight: Seedcorn Maggot

(Tucker Cade LaRue, laruet@purdue.edu) & (Laura Ingwell, lingwell@purdue.edu, (765) 494-6167)

Description

The seedcorn maggot, or *Delia platura*, is a frequent pest in the Anthomyiidae family that can affect both specialty and agronomic crops, including corn, melons, onions, pumpkins, and many others. The larvae, or maggots, of this species damage the crops. The larvae tend to be white or translucent in color, about 1/4 inch long, with a black hook-shaped mouthpart on one end (Figure 1). The pupae of this species are small brown cases that are about 1/4 inch long, usually resembling a wheat seed (Figure 2). The adults of this species are typically brown or grey in color, roughly 1/5 inch long, and look like a smaller version of a house fly (Figure 2).

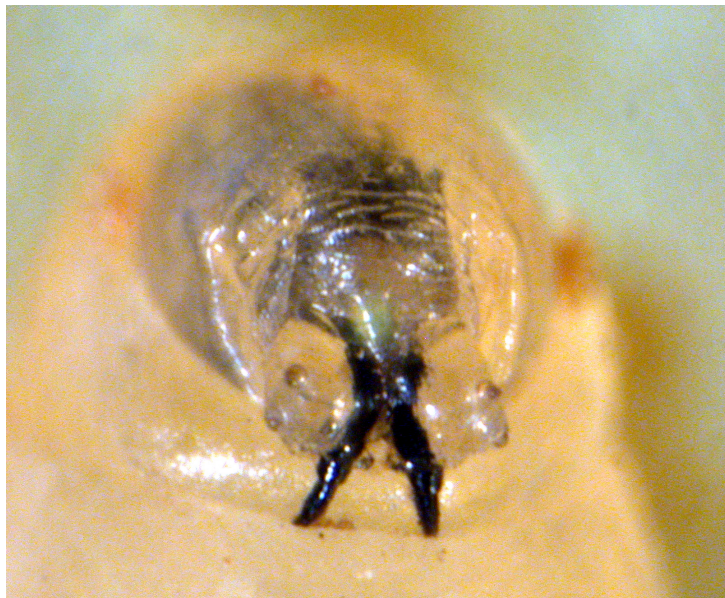


Figure 1. Head and mouthparts of a seedcorn maggot (Photo by John Obermeyer).



Figure 2. Seedcorn maggot adult next to pupal case on a corn kernel (photo by John Obermeyer).

Life Cycle

Seedcorn maggots overwinter as pupae in the soil, emerge as adults, and mate in early spring. The females will then lay their eggs in the soil, where they will hatch within 2-5 days. Afterwards, the larvae will then feed for about 2-3 weeks before pupating, where they will remain for 1-2 weeks in the soil before hatching. Typically, you will find the pupae in the dirt and roots surrounding the plant they fed on; however, the pupae can still be found inside the plant, living in the cavity it made during larval feeding.

Due to their short development time, you can expect 3-5 generations of seedcorn maggot a year. Luckily for us, we have the capacity to monitor and track these generations through a tool that we refer to as growing degree days. Knowing the temperature at which the fly is biologically active and developing, and the length of time at the specified temperature that it takes to complete each step of its development, we can track and predict the population cycles by following local weather conditions. For seedcorn maggot, we use the base temperature of 39°F to calculate the degree-day development of this insect.

Damage

Seedcorn maggot is a particularly detrimental pest as it feeds on the seeds and seedlings of plants. Typically, this damage is hard to catch at the onset as it occurs underground; however, the plant will typically begin showing signs of infestation soon after the larvae begin feeding. This can look like wilting (Figure 3) and necrosis near the base of the plant. Upon closer observation of the damage, one would notice heavy discoloration at the base of the plant with little to no resistance when gently squeezed. Upon breaking open the plant, one would notice a hollow cavity coated in a slime-like substance with the maggots moving around and the root structures greatly reduced or completely removed as a result of their feeding (Figures 4-5).



Figure 3. Onion plants wilting during a seedcorn maggot infestation (Photo by John Obermeyer).



Figure 4. Onion bulbs infested with seedcorn maggot (Photo by John Obermeyer).



Figure 5. Seedcorn maggot inside an infested green bean stalk (Photo by John Obermeyer).

crop has been attacked by seedcorn maggot. The best management strategies are preventative. This includes monitoring the emergence of seedcorn maggot using tools developed for growing degree day calculations and planting crops at times that avoid their peak activity.

The **VDIFN model** is one tool that can be effectively utilized to monitor the development of seedcorn maggot, among other pests. This model displays the accumulation of GDD and associated risk of pest pressure in each region of the map, based on temperature data (Figure 6). Using this tool at the time of writing, we can see that here in Indiana, the northern portion of the state is experiencing the peak emergence of the second generation of seedcorn maggot, while in the south, development of the third is underway, and the current risk to planting/seedlings is low.

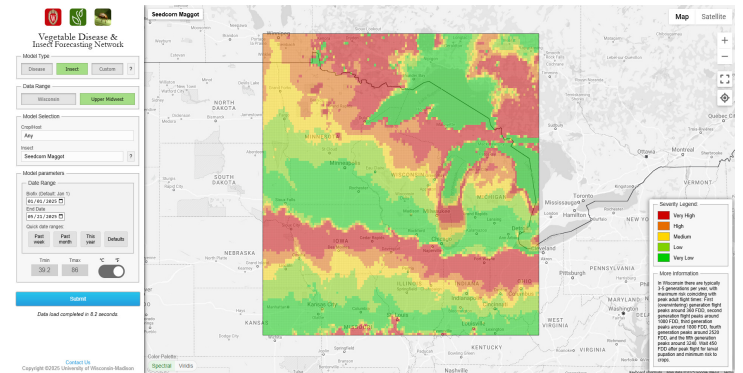


Figure 6. Screenshot of VDIFN tool showing current (5/22/2025) development of seedcorn maggot based on weather data.

The utility of this model is the first step in successful IPM for seedcorn maggots (and any other pest for which it can provide predictive models). You should consult the model first to see if you are at risk or not, then consider the history of the field you are planting, the susceptibility of the crop, and weigh the cost of an insecticide treatment as a prevention with the risk of encountering the pest during the most susceptible point of crop development.

Spring planting is the most susceptible because if conditions do not favor rapid growth of the plant (i.e., cold and wet), the insect has the advantage and can still feed. High residues of organic matter are attractive to adult flies for egg laying. If your site has a history of seedcorn maggot pressure and you are planting into soil with high organic matter or cover crop residues, you can consult the Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for guidance on pesticides that can be used at or near planting to prevent damage. During later times in the season, the pest is present, but conditions are typically more favorable for vigorous plant growth, and your seedlings or young transplants can compensate for some root feeding by outgrowing the threat.

Have fun with the seedcorn maggot GDD risk tool and take some time to explore other pests that can be monitored using the same methods! It can save you time scouting and money related to costly pesticide applications that may not be needed.

Management

Unfortunately, there are no effective rescue treatments once a

Will May's Mixed Precipitation and Temperatures Persist into June?

(Austin Pearson, pearsona@purdue.edu, (765) 675-1177)

Precipitation in May has varied tremendously, but most of the state has generally been on the dry side. Areas from Vermillion and Parke Counties to Lake Michigan have received between 25% and 75% of the normal precipitation through May 27 (Figure 1). Conditions were dry enough that thunderstorm winds on May 16 prompted the [National Weather Service Chicago Office](#) to issue rare dust storm warnings for Benton, Newton, Jasper, Lake, and Porter Counties. Farmers in these counties were further ahead due to the drier conditions, which exposed [emerged soybeans to severe damage](#) and led to widespread replanting decisions. Southern Indiana also faces challenges due to the limited planting windows. The [USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Indiana Crop Weather Report on May 27](#) indicated that 76% of corn and 71% of soybeans have been planted, both nearly on schedule despite the challenges.

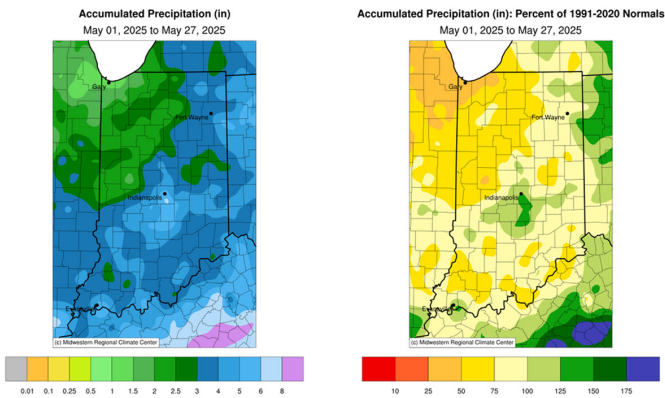


Figure 1: Left - May 1-27, 2025, accumulated precipitation represented as the departure from the 1991-2020 climatological normal. Right - May 1-27, 2025, accumulated precipitation represented as the percent of the 1991-2020 climatological normal.

Abnormally dry (D0) and moderate drought (D1) conditions are once again expanding across northern Indiana due to both short and long-term precipitation deficits. According to the US Drought Monitor on April 29, 2025, over 14% of the state was under D0 conditions. By May 27, 2025, the map reported that just over 32% of the state was experiencing either D0 or D1 conditions (Figure 2).

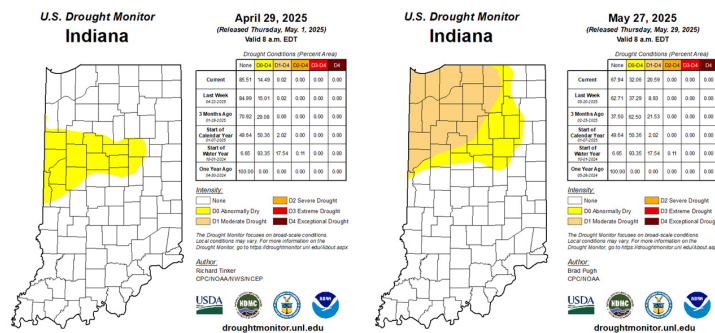


Figure 2: Left - April 29, 2025, US Drought Monitor Map. Right - May 27, 2025, US Drought Monitor Map.

Temperatures have been near or slightly below normal throughout the state, with the average for the state being 0.5°F below normal for the first 27 days of the month. In [last week's article](#), we discussed various GDD products and noted that these are purely temperature-driven. As a result, Modified Growing Degree Days since May 1 are between 20 and 40 units below normal (Figure 3).

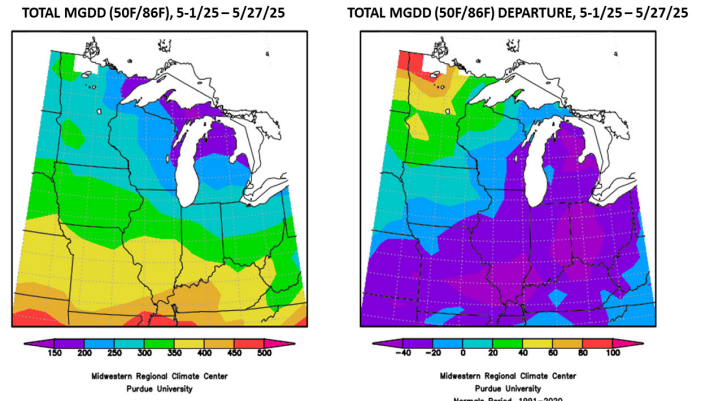


Figure 3: Left - Total MGDD (50°F/86°F) accumulation for May 1-27, 2025. Right - Total MGDD (50°F/86°F) accumulation displayed as the departure from the 1991-2020 climatological normal.

What can we expect for June? The [Climate Prediction Center](#) outlook indicates near-normal precipitation and above-normal temperatures for the first week of June (Figure 4). This trend of increased chances for above-normal rainfall and temperatures is likely to persist into the second week (Figure 5). Overall, CPC products indicate that the western half of the state is expected to experience above-normal temperatures, with equal chances for precipitation. In contrast, the eastern half is expected to see above-normal rainfall.

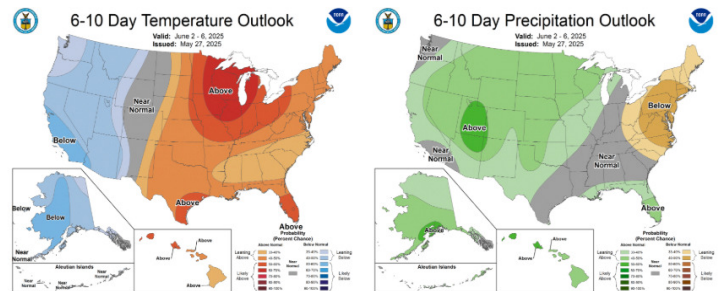


Figure 4: CPC 6-10 Day temperature and precipitation outlook maps, valid June 2-6, 2025.

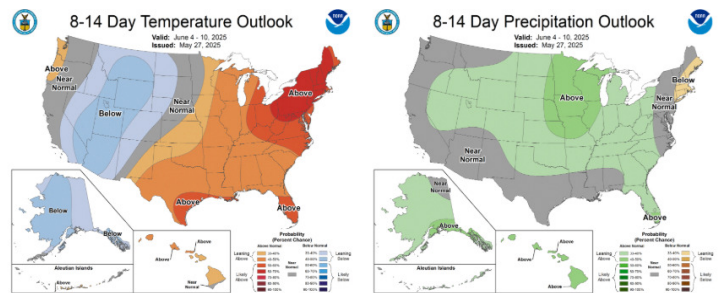


Figure 5: CPC 8-14 Day temperature and precipitation outlooks, valid June 4-10, 2025.

New Publication – Freeze-drying Food Preservation

(Tari Gary) & (Amanda J Deering, adeering@purdue.edu)

Freeze-drying is rapidly gaining momentum as a method for home food preservation as freeze-dryer units become more accessible to the general public. This unique process involves removing water from a food product to preserve its color, nutritional value, and structural integrity.

In a recent Extension publication, two Purdue University researchers discuss food safety, dehydrating versus freeze drying (and when to use one or the other), and the best foods to freeze dry for home gardeners and consumption. You can view the publication via Purdue's Education Store here:

<https://edustore.purdue.edu/fs-160-w.html>.

While there are no restrictions on freeze-drying products for home use, there are only a few select products that may be freeze-dried at home and sold by home-based vendors (HBV). According to the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH), HBVs may only sell the following freeze-dried products: pre-manufactured confectionary items, or fruits that are no larger than a small marble (e.g., blueberry) that have not been cut or processed further. For more information on HBV products and regulations, please visit [Purdue's Home-Based Vendor resource page](#).

Shape the Conversation: Submit Your Topics for Indiana's 2026 Horticulture and Small Farm Conferences

(Laura Ingwell, lingwell@purdue.edu, (765) 494-6167)

Submit your content ideas for the 2026 Indiana Horticulture and Small Farm Conference.

Do you want to hear from someone in particular or about a specific topic at this year's newly combined conference? If so, please scan the QR code or follow the link below to submit your suggestions. The survey will be open until July 15, 2025.

https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_23Mes7vXu2xqtCG

Save the Date: March 3-5, 2026, Hendricks Co. Fairgrounds



Managing Conservation Plantings Series Provides Science-Based Recommendations for Landowners, Managers

(Wendy Mayer, wendymayer@purdue.edu)

This article was originally published by the [Department of Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue University](#).

The Managing Conservation Plantings series provides landowners and managers with science-based recommendations to combat many of the common issues that arise in native warm-season grass and wildflower conservation plantings. From battling problematic plants like sericea lespedeza (Figure 1) to reducing dense native grass, each publication focuses on a specific challenge and aims to provide practical guidance and best practices to improve native plantings for wildlife.



Figure 1. Sericea lespedeza (Photo by Jarred Brooke).

"These publications were created to provide landowners and managers with up-to-date and science-backed recommendations to address some of the common challenges when managing native plantings," said [Jarred Brooke](#), Purdue Extension wildlife specialist.

The publications are a result of a partnership between [Purdue Extension](#) (FNR and Weed Science), the [Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife](#), [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), [Pheasants Forever](#) and [Quail Forever](#).

"The 'Managing Conservation Plantings' publication series is a much-needed document helping guide those engaged in developing conservation cover through the common challenges, opportunities, and hurdles that coincide with habitat management in Indiana," said Josh Griffin, Farm Bill Coordinator with the Indiana DNR-Division of Fish and Wildlife. "The documents are dual purpose and guide both landowners and resource professionals in decision-making positions regarding how best to navigate and mitigate best management of conservation cover."

The nine publications cover:

- [Goldenrod Control](#)
- [Thinning Native Warm Season Grasses](#)
- [Sericea Lespedeza Control](#)

- [Woody Encroachment and Woody Invasives](#)
- [Johnsongrass Control \(Figure 2\)](#)
- [Reed Canarygrass Control](#)
- [Teasel Control \(Common and Cut Leaved\)](#)
- [Controlling Introduced Cool-Season Grasses](#)
- [Crownvetch, Sweetclover and Birdsfoot Trefoil Control](#)



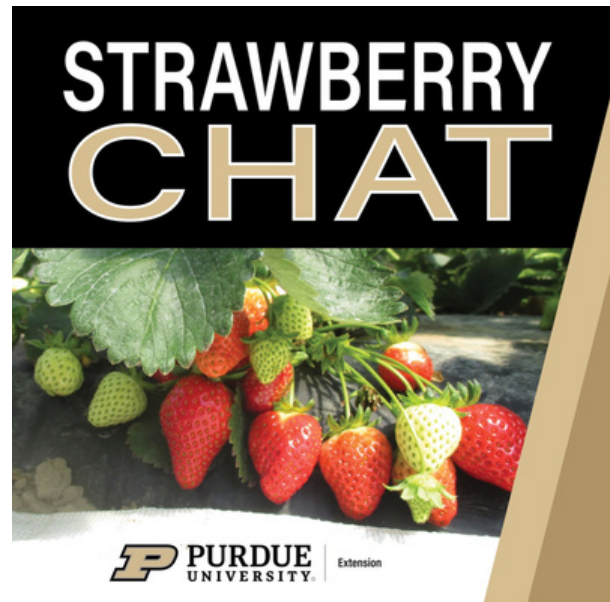
Figure 2. Johnsongrass (Photo by Jarred Brooke).

Olivia Fry, Southwest Indiana Farm Bill Biologist for Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, said the publications bring expert conservation assistance and multiple management options to the public.

“These publications address multiple problems that landowners and land managers have been dealing with on their property and demonstrate how conservation organizations/agencies like Purdue Extension, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever and the Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife are addressing these issues in a collaborative way,” Fry said. “The ‘Managing Conservation Plantings’ series not only gives solutions, but it also gives options. With these documents, landowners can identify the method that is most feasible for them, manage their properties appropriately and feel confident doing so.”

Strawberry Chat Podcast: Neopestalotiopsis and Resistant Strawberry Varieties

(Wenjing Guan, guan40@purdue.edu, (812) 886-0198)



A new StrawberryChat podcast episode was posted

[Farmer Interview with McNitt Growers: Neopestalotiopsis and Resistant Varieties | Episode 20, May 16, 2025](#)

In this episode, we talk with Bill McNitt, owner of [McNitt Growers](#)—a nursery specializing in spring bedding plants and fall strawberry plug production. Bill shares his firsthand insights into how Neopestalotiopsis disease has affected the strawberry industry and discusses the promising opportunities presented by newly released resistant varieties now available to fruit growers.

Purdue Hosts Maple Syrup Quality Control Training Program

(Amy Thompson, athompson@purdue.edu)

Indiana produces approximately 22,000 gallons of maple syrup each year, and this natural sweetener has a wide range of culinary uses. However, the flavor of maple syrup can be affected by various factors during the collection and processing of sap. To ensure high-quality syrup production, the University of Vermont Extension and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension have developed a one-day hybrid training program focused on maple syrup quality control. Purdue University Extension is partnering with these institutions to bring this program to Indiana.

Program Overview

This hands-on training will help participants learn to properly use a variety of maple syrup grading tools while also gaining insights into how improper use of these tools can impact syrup quality.

Participants will also enjoy guided tastings of high-quality standard syrup samples, and they will have the opportunity to taste and discuss syrups with off-flavors to better understand the nuances of maple syrup quality.

Event Details

- **Date & Time:** June 17, 2025, from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
- **Location:** Hendricks County Fairgrounds, 1900 E Main St, Danville, IN 46122
- **Cost:** \$20 per participant (payable on the day of the event)

Program Benefits

Participants will receive several valuable materials, including:

- A maple syrup hydrometer
- A thermometer
- A temporary maple color kit
- A booklet on chemical safety in the sugarhouse
- Temperature and density compensation cards
- Curated maple syrup samples for tasting

Registration

To register for the program, please contact Amy Thompson at 812-727-4331 or via email at afthompson@purdue.edu.

If you require accommodations to attend the program, have special dietary needs, or need an interpreter or translator, please contact Amy Thompson by June 10.

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Maple Syrup Quality Control Program



June 17th, 2025
8:30 to 3:30 PM

Hendricks County Fairgrounds, 1900 E Main St,
Danville, IN 46122

- Learn to properly use various maple syrup grading tools
- Understand the impact of improper tool use on syrup quality
- Enjoy guided tastings of high-quality standard syrup samples
- Taste and discuss syrups with off-flavors to explore quality nuances
- Cost is \$20

To register for the program, please contact Amy Thompson at 812-727-4331 or via email at afthompson@purdue.edu.
If you require accommodations to attend the program, have special dietary needs, or need an interpreter or translator, please contact Amy Thompson by June 10.
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Maple syrup quality control program

Southwest Purdue Agriculture Center Field Day Set for June 26

(Wenjing Guan, guan40@purdue.edu, (812) 886-0198)

The Southwest Purdue Agricultural Center (SWPAC) is one of the eight Purdue Agricultural Centers located across Indiana. What makes SWPAC unique is its location in the heart of Indiana's watermelon-growing region—home to one of the state's most significant specialty crop industries. In addition to watermelon and cantaloupe, southern Indiana is known for its diverse fruit and vegetable production, along with a strong presence of agronomic crops. As farming practices advance and industry needs change, research and Extension priorities at SWPAC continue to evolve to meet those demands.

The SWPAC Field Day offers a valuable opportunity to see these changes firsthand. It's an event for anyone passionate about agriculture and eager to learn more about how our food is produced and how production practices are adapting.

During the field day, participants will tour the research plots and hear presentations on a variety of topics, including:

- Winter canola production and market potential
- Sorghum as an alternative crop across Indiana
- Enhancing seed quality traits in cowpeas
- Using drones for pesticide application
- Pollinator health and the use of pollenizers in watermelon

- production
- Resilient agriculture and Purdue's initiative to implement these practices
- High tunnel tomato production and a cut flower research initiative
- Evaluation of synthetic and biological fungicides for watermelon and tomato production
- Recent updates on field crop diseases
- Changes in food safety regulations and new research projects related to food safety
- The Diverse Corn Belt project

Additionally, Dr. Fred Whitford will deliver a special presentation, "Horsepower on the Farm: From Hay-Powered Horses to Gas-Powered Tractors" sharing the fascinating story of how agriculture has evolved over the years.

The SWPAC Field Day is free to attend, and lunch will be provided, thanks to the support of our generous sponsors!

For more event details, please refer to the flyer. To register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/2025SWPACFieldDay> or call 812-886-0198

Small Farm Education Field Day Will Feature New Research, Live Demonstrations and Purdue Experts

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The Purdue Small Farm Education Field Day, scheduled for July 24, 2025, will feature demonstrations and presentations designed to support small-scale farming.

The Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture will co-host the event with the Purdue Student Farm. Attendees can learn from Purdue University and Purdue Extension experts about topics such as small-scale farming hacks, container farming (hydroponics), raised garden beds for vegetables, sweet pepper production, equipment demonstrations, food safety in packinghouses, and pest monitoring using pheromone traps.

"This field day creates a vibrant hub where small farm operators and urban growers from across Indiana converge. Its thoughtfully designed structure provides meaningful opportunities for exchanging practical knowledge and building valuable relationships," said Petrus Langenhoven, Purdue Student Farm director. "We've consistently seen participants implement specific techniques learned here to enhance their own farms and urban gardens. Often, it's the nuanced practices—details we as educators might overlook—that dramatically transform the productivity and sustainability of small-scale agricultural operations."



SPONSORS		SOUTHWEST PURDUE AGRICULTURAL CENTER	
<p>This field day is made possible in part through grant support, including Diverse Corn Belt, a USDA-NIFA Sustainable Agriculture Systems funded grant. Project Improve High Tunnel Sustainability through Biological Control of Root-knot Nematodes supported by North Center SARE Research and Education Grant. Harnessing the Power of Suppressive Soils to Manage Root-knot Nematode in Organic Vegetable Production supported by USDA-NIFA Organic Transitions Program. And Bees & the bottom line: uncovering the effects of insecticides on crop pollination and yield supported by USDA-NIFA Pollinator Health Program.</p>		<p>FIELD DAY June 26, 2025</p> 	
<p>GOLD</p> 		 <p>Extension</p>	
<p>SILVER</p> 			
<p>BRONZE</p> 			
AGENDA		Topic	Presenter(s)
8:00 – 8:45 am: Registration		Field crop disease update on research and things to remember this season	Morgan Goodnight, Botany and Plant Pathology
8:45 – 9:00 am: Group Distribution		High tunnel tomato and cut flower research	Wenjing Guan, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture
9:00 am – 12:30 pm: Tour to Horticulture and Agronomic Crops 10 stops during the tour, please see the description on the next page		Fungicide efficacy trial research on vegetable crops	César Escalante, Botany and Plant Pathology
12:30 – 1:30 pm: Lunch (provided)		Purdue resilient ag initiative	Laura Ingwell, Entomology
Presentations during Lunch: Diverse Corn Belt — Project Overview and Dr. Fred Whitford — Horsepower on the Farm: From Hay-Powered Horses to Gas-Powered Tractors		Pollinator health and pollener use in seedless watermelon production	Amy Lynn Bagby, Entomology
1:30 pm: Adjourn - Field Day		Produce food safety update	Scott Monroe, Purdue Extension, and Kathryn Parraga, Food Science
For special dietary needs contact Barb Joyner and 812-886-0198 by June 19, 2025.		Overview of spray drones in Indiana	Alex Helms and Jackson Shake, Purdue Agricultural Center
		Winter canola production	Brian Caldebeck, Caldebeck Consulting
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		Identifying Genes Behind Protein in Cowpea Seeds	Jean Paul Iyakaremye, Botany and Plant Pathology
		Registration: https://tinyurl.com/2025SWPACFieldDay or call 812-886-0198	
			

2024 Small Farm Education Field Day (Photo by Joshua Clark).

Attendee registration costs \$40 and can be completed [here](#). Students and Extension educators can register at a discounted rate. Registration information will be available at [Purdue Small Farm Education Field Day](#).

The event will run from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Purdue Student Farm, located at 1491 Cherry Lane, West Lafayette, Indiana. Lunch is not included, but each attendee can receive a free Kona ice cup, and a food truck will be on site.

Program details are being finalized and will be available soon.

If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact Lori Jolly-Brown at 765-494-1296 or ljollybr@purdue.edu



2024 Small Farm Education Field Day (Photo by Joshua Clark).

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