

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 Vegetable Crops Hotline Readers,

Welcome to issue 779 of the Vegetable Crops Hotline newsletter! Our mission remains steadfast: to deliver crucial updates on pest management, production practices, food safety, and marketing opportunities that directly impact your farming operations.

What's Inside This Issue

Fall is here, and on many Indiana farms the season is shifting from harvest to planning. This issue offers something for both. You'll find a regulatory update that fills the gap left by Rely® 280, and a new EPA tool that keeps pesticide users current on Endangered Species Act requirements. Upcoming educational opportunities include webinars on agritourism and on soil science for cut flower production, a Market Ready workshop in Fort Wayne, and an MVEG field day on farm infrastructure. We also introduce a new publication on the diverse pumpkins and winter squashes that fill Indiana farm stands each autumn.



Figure 1. Bin with a variety of winter squash fruits (Photo by Petrus Langenhoven).

Pumpkins and winter squash are also the crops that need attention right now. Harvest when the fruit has reached full mature color, the rind is hard enough to resist a fingernail, and the stem has begun to dry and turn corky. Cut the fruit from the vine with pruners or a sharp knife, leaving a 3- to 4-inch stem on pumpkins. Never carry them by the stem, because a broken handle is an open door for rot. Get fruit out of the field before a hard freeze. Frost-damaged fruit breaks down quickly in storage, and a light frost that kills the canopy leaves fruit exposed to sunscald. Handle everything gently, since bruises and cuts shorten shelf life. Curing at about 80-85°F for 7-10 days hardens the rind and heals minor wounds on pumpkins, butternut, and hubbard types. Skip curing acorn squash, as it loses quality under those conditions. After curing, store in a dry, well-ventilated space at 50-55°F.

Subscription Information

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If you need a hard-copy subscription form and don't have internet access, please contact your nearest [Purdue Extension office](#). Extension Educators, [please download the hard-copy subscription form](#).

Digital Subscribers

If you receive the newsletter via email, you do not need to take any action. You will continue to receive the newsletter on the issue date.

New digital subscribers [can now register their email address](#)

In addition, digital subscribers receive emails with information about articles or announcements that need your immediate attention. These articles will be posted under Hot Topics on the VCH webpage and will be included in the next issue. All previous articles published in the VCH newsletter are available on the [Vegetable Crops Hotline website](#).

Website Links in Newsletter Articles

We frequently include links to websites or online publications. If you can't access these resources, 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 [2026 Midwest Vegetable Production Guide](#) is now available for growers, or you can [download and print a guide from your computer](#). The guide is also available for \$20 per copy. Contact your Extension Office or [Stephen Meyers](#) directly to purchase a copy.

Midwest Vegetable Trial Reports

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

Contact Us If You Have a Story to Share

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 email [Petrus Langenhoven](#) or reach out to the [specialist](#) directly. We also welcome high-quality photos of pest issues, unusual symptoms, or innovative production practices you've implemented on your farm.

As always, thank you for reading, and happy growing!

Petrus Langenhoven, Editor

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

Forfeit® 280 Now Registered For Use In Select Vegetable Crops In Indiana

(Stephen Meyers, slmeyers@purdue.edu, (765) 496-6540)

Earlier this summer, I wrote a Vegetable Crops Hotline article discussing the loss of Rely® 280 herbicide. That article can be found here: [Rely® 280 Herbicide – Going, Going, Gone | Purdue University Vegetable Crops Hotline](#)

Rely® 280 was registered for use in cantaloupe, cucumber, summer squash, watermelon, tomato, and pepper in 2023 through two separate supplemental labels. To address the loss of Rely® 280, I collaborated with Indiana vegetable growers, the Office of the Indiana State Chemist (OISC), and Loveland Products, Inc to request 24c Special Local Needs labels for Forfeit® 280 in these same crops. Since that earlier newsletter article, this request has been approved.

Two Forfeit® 280 labels covering burndown and row middle applications in these crops have been approved and are available on the OISC special state registrations webpage ([Pesticide Section – Pesticide Products & Devices](#)). One label covers tomato and pepper. The other covers cantaloupe, cucumber, summer squash, and watermelon. Use rates and application requirements are the same as those for Rely® 280. Applicators should ensure that they have both the container label and the 24c label(s) available during application and as part of their application record keeping.

For more information on how to use Rely® 280 or Forfeit® 280 in cucurbits and fruiting vegetables, you can visit this archived VCH article: [Rely® 280 Added to Row Middle Weed Control Arsenal in Select Crops | Purdue University Vegetable Crops Hotline](#)

Midwest Vegetable Growers (MVEG) Field Day: Building Out Farm Infrastructure

Please consider joining us at our next [MVEG Field Day in Beaverville, IL](#), to learn about building out farm infrastructure in a hands-on learning format led by farmer Fresh Roberson of [Fresher Together](#), alongside educators from [Farmers Rising](#) & the [Carey Center for Agrarian Learning](#) at McHenry County College. If you're planning your farm's building needs, looking for more resources on equipping your farm, want to hear others' personal experiences with farm infrastructure, or are seeking connection with other farmers—come on out!

This event will be held rain or shine from 2:30-5 PM on Tues. Oct. 6 with optional hang-out time following the education & farm tour. BYOB to linger, chat, & network with other participants; snacks & hydration will be provided!

Attendance is free, but please [register](#) so we can plan for the right number of guests.

Questions? Contact Sadie Willis.

[FairShare CSA Coalition](#)

Office: 608.226.0300

Cell: 816.739.1285

211 S Paterson St., Suite 280, Madison, WI 53703



Market Ready Training

(Sarah Hanson, sspeedy@purdue.edu)



Do you know local food producers or farmers who want to sell to restaurants, grocery stores, schools, or wholesale distributors? I am letting you know that we're offering the [Market Ready](#) program as an all-day, in-person workshop on October 30th at the Allen County Purdue Extension office (4001 Crescent Avenue, Fort Wayne, Indiana).

Participants will learn how to meet buyer expectations and prepare their businesses for new market opportunities. The training covers food safety rules and regulations, insurance, and risk management. The [Indiana State Department of Agriculture](#) is helping cover registration for eligible applicants. Contact Sarah Hanson via [email](#) or call 765-543-1230 to check eligibility before registration.

[Register here](#)

Registration is limited to 30 participants, and the deadline is October 23.

The cost is \$50 for those who are not eligible for the discount. The workshop includes a buyer panel, lunch, and a manual.

The program equips local food producers with the knowledge to take their business to the next level. We are excited for the possibilities as Indiana producers venture into new marketing channels and learn more about product quality, food safety, insurance/managing risks, etc.

EPA Launches New Email Subscription Feature to Help Pesticide Users with Endangered Species Act Requirements

[EPA Press Release](#) - September 15, 2026

Today, EPA is announcing a new email subscription feature to help pesticide users quickly receive updates from the Bulletins Live! Two system, including notifications about new Pesticide Use Limitation Areas (PULAs) and changes to existing PULAs. EPA developed this feature in direct response to requests from pesticide users who asked for better access to Bulletins Live! Two updates. With this feature, whenever Endangered Species Act requirements are updated in Bulletins Live! Two, subscribed pesticide users will receive an email with the latest information, saving them time and making their jobs easier.

Pesticide labels can direct users to the Bulletins Live! Two system for additional, area-specific measures needed to protect threatened and endangered (listed) species and their designated critical habitat. Because EPA continually updates the system—including adding and revising PULAs for different geographic areas—a pesticide user might not see restrictions for a product today but could in the future. The new subscription feature will help pesticide users learn about relevant updates in near real time, so they can act quickly and with confidence based on Bulletins Live! Two information delivered directly to them.

With this new email subscription feature, subscribers will receive:

- Notifications of major Bulletins Live! Two system updates
- Announcements of new PULAs
- Alerts about changes to existing PULAs

To subscribe, please visit the [EPA](#).

Diverse Pumpkin and Winter Squash Grown in Indiana

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



Figure 1. A variety of winter squashes sold at a farm stand. From left:

spaghetti (yellow), kabocha (green and red), specialty butternut (dark tan), acorn (green), butternut (light tan), and delicata-type (creamy and green strips) (Photo by Wenjing Guan).

Indiana is one of the nation's leading pumpkin-producing states. In 2025, growers planted about 7,900 acres, placing Indiana second in the nation for pumpkin production. Growers sell most of the crop in September and October for decoration or home use. Jack-o'-lanterns remain a fall favorite, while specialty pumpkins bring an array of colors, shapes, and textures to farm markets, roadside stands, and autumn displays.

Our new publication explores the pumpkins and winter squashes found at Indiana farm stands. It traces the Jack-o'-lantern tradition, looks at winter squash as a food and storage vegetable, and explains how the familiar names "pumpkin" and "winter squash" relate to species in the genus *Cucurbita*.

Whether you grow these crops, sell them, or simply enjoy seeing them in the fall, we hope the publication helps you discover something new.

[Read the full publication](#)

[Download the PDF](#)

Gro Pro Webinar Series: Soil Science For Sustainable Cut Flower Production

Date and Time

September 29, 2026 at 01:00 PM in Indiana (ET)

Description

Welcome to the American Floral Endowment's Grow Pro Webinar Series! Throughout this series, our nationally recognized researchers, hosts, and speakers will offer 'how-to' advice based on AFE-funded and other research projects to help the industry navigate these ever-changing growing challenges. The webinar topics are current and offer long-term opportunities for growers to focus on increased profit, greater sustainability, and improved labor efficiency. Each session includes a presentation and interactive Q&A. To see the full series calendar, visit endowment.org/GrowPro. The September 29th session focuses on soil science for sustainable cut flower production. Healthy soil is the foundation of successful and sustainable cut flower production. In this Grow Pro webinar, Melanie Stock of Utah State University will explore key soil science principles that support strong plant growth, nutrient efficiency, and long-term soil health. Attendees will learn how soil physical, chemical, and biological properties influence crop performance and management decisions. This session will provide practical insights growers can use to build resilient production systems from the ground up.

About the Speaker – Dr. Melanie Stock (Soil

Scientist, Utah State University)

Dr. Stock is a soil scientist. Her lab focuses on high-value crops and resource use efficiency to improve the environmental sustainability and economic viability of small farms. Her research focuses on adapting cut flower crops for Utah, from basic cultivation methods to nutrient management and physics-based season extension, overwintering, and water-use efficiency. Her teaching interests include community-based education through Extension outreach with microfarmers, master gardeners, and community gardens. Topics include cut flowers, high tunnels, backyard livestock, manure management, and soil fertility.

[Registration link](#)

Findings from the National Study of Agritourism Operators

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

Agritourism: Understanding Benefits, Challenges, and Needs throughout the USA

Date & Time

October 6, 2:00 PM ET

Webinar Description

What are the primary concerns and challenges for agritourism operators in the USA — and how are these concerns being addressed? This webinar summarizes key findings from interviews with farmers and a nationwide survey of agritourism operators conducted in 2025.

Hosted by the Global Agritourism Network and the National Extension Tourism Network, this webinar will be moderated by Lisa Chase of University of Vermont Extension. Panelists include Claire Whitehouse from the University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies, who led the survey research; Rusty Rumley from the National Agricultural Law Center, who will share the latest information regarding liability and regulations impacting agritourism; Americo Vega-Labiosa and Annelise Straw from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, discussing programs that support agritourism; and Scottie Jones from Leaping Lamb Farm in Oregon, who will talk about ways that farmers, ranchers, tourism professionals, and policymakers can use this information to strengthen agritourism locally, regionally, nationally, and even internationally.

[Register now for the webinar](#)

For more information about the **2025 National Survey of Agritourism Operators**, visit the [University of Vermont's Agritourism Research website](#).

(Stephen Meyers, slmeyers@purdue.edu, (765) 496-6540)

Herbicide tolerance is the inherent ability of a plant species to survive a normal use rate of a herbicide. Most herbicides have a “sweet spot” in the types of weeds that they control. Meaning that, for any given herbicide, there are many weed species that are only suppressed or not controlled at all. Some examples of herbicide tolerance are very obvious. If you apply clethodim (a WSSA Group 1 herbicide) to grass and broadleaf weeds, it will only kill the grasses because clethodim is a “grass-selective” herbicide. The opposite is true for synthetic auxin herbicides (WSSA Group 4), such as 2,4-D, which are active only on broadleaf plant species. But herbicide tolerance can be more subtle. For example, soil-applied Command herbicide (clomazone) works well on velvetleaf but is weak on pigweeds. Soil-applied Dual Magnum herbicide (S-metolachlor) works well on pigweeds, but will not control lambsquarters. Sometimes tolerance is tied to weed seed size. Many soil-applied herbicides are “effective against small-seeded grasses and broadleaf weeds” while providing little to no control of larger-seeded weed species. One way to explore herbicide tolerance is to examine herbicide efficacy tables, such as those in the [Midwest Vegetable Production Guide](#) (Figure 1).

[illegible]

Figure 1. An example of a herbicide efficacy table taken from the 2026 Midwest Vegetable Production Guide. Control is rated as - (unknown), N (none), P (poor), F (fair), G (good), or E (excellent).

If you find yourself saying “this herbicide used to provide good control of this weed, but it doesn’t control it now”, what you are observing is likely **herbicide resistance**.

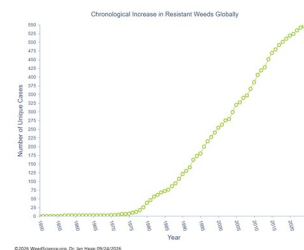


Figure 2. Number of unique herbicide-resistant plant species globally.

Other considerations: Related to herbicide resistance and herbicide tolerance in weedy plants is the herbicide resilience of a soil. Many herbicides are degraded by bacteria in the soil. Repeated application of herbicides can “prime” the soil by encouraging a shift in soil microbes toward those that break down herbicides. The most studied example is atrazine. When atrazine is applied to a field for 5 or more growing seasons, the length of its residual weed control is greatly reduced. For example, researchers in Tennessee reported that soils with no history of atrazine have a half-life of 17 days. However, the half-life of atrazine in soils with a history of atrazine use ranged from 3 to 11 days. While atrazine is the most common example, this condition may also apply to other herbicides as well.