

WEEKLY CROP UPDATE



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
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Vegetable Crops

Experiences with an Heirloom Pole Snap

Bean - *Gordon Johnson, Extension Vegetable & Fruit Specialist; gcjohn@udel.edu*

I spent 5 years in the Seychelles Islands, an Indian Ocean Island nation, as a Peace Corps volunteer and an agricultural school teacher. While there, we grew a very prolific pole snap bean from South Africa called 'Witsa'. This bean was great tasting, high yielding and long lived. It was a strong climber and trellised very easily.

After coming back to the US, I could not find this bean variety in any seed catalogs. While teaching Master Gardeners about vegetables, I challenged them to find me some 'Witsa' beans and one of the students brought some seeds back from South Africa. Ever since I have been growing 'Witsa' in my home garden and have found it to be well adapted to my Eastern Shore Maryland location.

Most pole snap beans such as Kentucky Wonder or Kentucky Blue do not hold up well in the heat of summer. I have found 'Witsa' to be much more heat tolerant. Even though it will slow down in July heat, as it cools down in August, it reflowers and produces high yields into September.

I have also tried a new All American Selection pole snap bean ironically named 'Seychelles' <https://all-americanselections.org/product/bean-pole-seychelles/> and have found 'Witsa' to be higher yielding and more heat tolerant.

This heirloom bean (Witsa) is a South African bean developed in 1951 from a cross between Green Savage and St. Louis Perfection. It is a very long, tender podded, stringless bean with good disease resistance and outstanding productivity. It is also very tender with low fiber content.

Information on its history can be found here in a PDF image of an old South African market bulletin from June 1966:

https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00148490_3532



Image from <http://onesunnyacre.blogspot.com/2021/11/the-real-witsa-bean.html>

As The pods average 8 inches long, with 9-10 seeds per pod. They remain tender even as the seeds fill out in the pod. The plants are vigorous climbers, and the blooms are white. It is one of the most productive beans pole snap beans I have grown. It has an initial large flush around 65 days from planting, the vines remain disease-free and healthy, and it gave me a second large flush in August through September. Off 16 poles, I harvested about 20 bushels of beans.

Unfortunately, most of the beans being sold out there as Witsa are not Witsa (a flat podded type is being sold a Witsa but it is not the original Witsa). From the blog <http://onesunnyacre.blogspot.com/2021/11/the-real-witsa-bean.html> they state “Adding to the confusion is that most are listed as a Runner bean, but this is a Common bean, *Phaseolus vulgaris*. This may be a cultural difference by country in which they mean a Runner bean to be a Pole bean, not *P. coccineus* as we know a Runner bean to be.”

The dry pods are easy to shell once allowed to dry if saving seed. I have been saving seed and hope to have some to sell in the future. You will not be disappointed with this heirloom pole snap bean.

Much of the information in this article came from <http://onesunnyacre.blogspot.com/2021/11/the-real-witsa-bean.html>.

Agronomic Crops

2022 Hybrid Corn Test Results

The University of Delaware 2022 hybrid corn performance test report is posted online. Use the following links to view the report.

Here is a link to the Corn Crops page: <https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/canr/cooperative-extension/sustainable-production/commercial-crops/field-crops/corn/>

Here is a direct link to the pdf: <https://www.udel.edu/content/dam/udelImage/s/canr/pdfs/extension/sustainable->

[agriculture/vegetable-trials/cornhybridtrials-2022.pdf](#)

General

AgBiz Masters Class Begins in January

Are you a young, beginning, small, minority, or veteran farmer? Are you interested in growing your business and financial management skills? If you are looking for a hands-on educational program that tackles the questions and challenges you have about managing your agricultural business, then AgBiz Masters is your answer.

AgBiz Masters recently opened registration for its next class, which begins in January 2023 and ends in mid-April. This nationally recognized and FSA Certified program helps young and beginning farmers develop skills to ensure the long-term sustainability of their businesses.

AgBiz Masters delivers hands-on business and financial management training to young and beginning farmers. Topics covered in the program include:

Year One

- Megatrends of Agriculture
- Strategic Business Planning
- Preparing for Your Lender
- Constructing a Balance Sheet
- Constructing an Income Statement and Cash Flow Projection

Year Two

- Understanding Lending Decisions
- Farm Business Management Factors and Benchmarks
- Growth and Transition Management
- Personal Financial Management
- Communications, Ethics and Leadership

Program content is designed specifically with young and beginning farmers in mind. The following are just a few of the comments that summarize the experience:

“AgBiz was helpful in building our understanding and increasing our knowledge of business planning and finance management.”

“AgBiz taught me to think of the farm as more of a business, not just a job.”

“The hands-on exercises and worksheets that were on-farm examples were extremely helpful.”

“AgBiz has made me think about areas I was previously not thinking about. The business plan is such a great tool.”

To learn more about AgBiz Masters and register online, visit AgBizMasters.com. The registration deadline is December 23, 2022. For more information, contact learning@horizonfc.com.

Open Enrollment for Health Insurance and Medicare is Happening Now - Maria Pippidis, Extension Educator Family & Consumer Sciences; pippidis@udel.edu

Are you spending too much on health insurance? It's time to do a health insurance check up!

Open enrollment for the Health Insurance Marketplace (November 1, 2022, through January 15, 2023) for those under age 65 and Medicare (October 15 through December 7) for those over 65 is happening now. Even if you have health insurance already, comparison shopping can help you save money and get better coverage. It is important to compare not only the premium costs but also other out of pocket costs like deductible, copayments and coinsurance in relation to how often you use health care services. There are also options for dental insurance. Think back about how you have used health care services in the past to help you do an estimate of how much these other out of pocket costs might affect the choice of plans you consider.

Remember, for health insurance marketplace plans, prevention services like annual check ups with your primary care provider or gynecologist are covered at no charge.

For those under age 65, use the choosehealthde.com website to see options for you and your family or for covering employees if

you are a small business. Depending on your income you will have a variety of health insurance policy options and tax credits or tax subsidies. Here are some examples for a family of 4 with 2 children under 18 years of age:

- If your income is below \$38,295/year you may qualify for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or Medicaid.
- An income range between \$38,295 and \$69,375/year will provide coverage with tax credits on premiums and reduced deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance.
- An income range between \$69,375 and \$111,000 will provide coverage with reduced premiums.

This is just an example and the income ranges will be based on your family size. By going to the website and adding your specific information, you'll get a better sense of the costs and coverage. I personally have seen farm operators save thousands of dollars by exploring the marketplace for health insurance options.

You can explore options online or you can get help by talking to a health insurance navigator. In Delaware, Westside Health has certified assisters who will help you go over different plans and explain the benefits, all at no charge and with no commitment for you to sign up. You can contact them in whatever way works best for you. You can make an appointment or talk to a navigator in New Castle County by calling 302.472.8655 or in Kent and Sussex Counties call 302.678.2205. You can also communicate via email at: enrollment@westsidehealth.org.

For those who are 65 and older, use the medicare.gov website to see which Medicare Advantage Plans or Medicare Supplemental (Medigap) plans are available in your area. You can comparison shop these plans very easily on the website. My advice is to ignore the TV commercials and the junk mail regarding Medicare plans. Rather use THE BEST Delaware specific resource to help you sort through information: the Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau (DMAB), formerly known as ELDERinfo.

This Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau (DMAB) provides free health insurance counseling for people with Medicare, including those under 65 years of age. You can call DMAB at 1-800-336-9500 or (302) 674-7364 to set up a free counseling session with a trained volunteer at a convenient site near you. Their goal is to empower people with Medicare to better understand their options and enable them to make the best health insurance decisions for themselves. The counselors can help you better understand your options to help you make the best decision for you related to Medicare, Medicaid, Medigap (Medicare supplement insurance), Medicare Part D, long-term care insurance and other types of health insurance. There is no charge for the service. You can learn more about DMAB by going to <https://insurance.delaware.gov/divisions/dmab/>.

Though it takes a bit of time, invest in yourself because no matter what age you are, reviewing your health insurance coverage is one of the best ways to stay financially and physically healthy in the coming year.

Announcements

Nematodes in Atlantic Soybean Production Webinar

December 5, 2022 1:00-3:00 p.m. EST
Online via Zoom

Nematodes consistently rank as a top yield robber of soybeans. Please plan to join us virtually on December 5 from 1:00-3:00 PM for the Nematode in Atlantic Soybean Production Webinar. This webinar will include results from Soybean Cyst Nematode seed treatment trials, Root-Knot Nematode on-farm trials, emerging management strategies, and feature a panel discussion on needs to improve nematode management in the region. The webinar is free, but registration is needed for access to the zoom link.

Registration information can be found at <https://www.pcsreg.com/2022-nematodes-in-atlantic-soybean-production-webinar>. Please email Alyssa Koehler akoehler@udel.edu with any questions.

Agenda

1:00 – 1:05

Welcome

Dr. Alyssa Koehler, Extension Field Crops Pathologist, University of Delaware

1:05 – 1:20

Nematodes of Concern to Soybean Production, Collecting Soil Samples, and Nematode Management Strategies

Andrew Kness, Extension Agent – University of Maryland

1:20 – 1:40

SCN Seed Treatment Trials

Dr. Alyssa Koehler, Extension Plant Pathologist, University of Delaware

1:40 – 2:00

Root-Knot Nematode On-Farm Trials

Dr. David Langston, Extension Field Crops Pathologist, Virginia Tech

2:00 – 2:15

Updates in Biological Nematicides

Dr. Matthew Pye, Biological Subject Matter Expert, FMC

2:15 – 2:30

Developments in Host Resistance

Dr. Melissa Mitchum, Professor of Plant Nematology, University of Georgia

2:30 – 3:00

Nematode Discussion Panel and Q&A

Panel Moderator: Dr. Alyssa Koehler, Extension Field Crops Pathologist, University of Delaware

Panelists:

Andrew Kness, Extension Agent – University of Maryland

Dr. David Langston, Extension Field Crops Pathologist, Virginia Tech

Dr. Melissa Mitchum, University of Georgia

Dr. Matthew Pye, Biological Subject Matter Expert, FMC

Delaware Agriculture Week

Monday, January 9 – Thursday, January 12, 2023

Delaware Agriculture Week will be back at the Delaware State Fairgrounds in Harrington from January 9-12, 2023! Delaware “Ag Week” is an ongoing collaboration between University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, Delaware State University Cooperative Extension and the Delaware Department of Agriculture.

Delaware Ag Week provides useful and timely information to the agricultural community and industry through educational meetings and events. In addition, it is a great time for networking and fellowship with old and new acquaintances.

The associated trade show will take place in the Dover Building from Monday afternoon, January 9 to Thursday January 12.

Delaware and Maryland pesticide and nutrient management credits and CCA credits will be available.

We are busy planning sessions and agendas, but please keep an eye on the Ag Week website for information and updates. <https://sites.udel.edu/delawareagweek/>

Tentative Ag Week Session Schedule

Monday, Jan. 9

Poultry
Beef
Fruit
Woodland

Tuesday, Jan. 10

General Vegetables
Fresh Market Vegetables
Hay and Pasture
Small Ruminant
Farmers Market Managers
Specialty Crop Block Grant

Wednesday, Jan. 11

Processing Vegetables
Pollinators
Nutrient Management
Risk Management
Small Flock Poultry
Small Farm Irrigation

Thursday, Jan. 12

Agronomy/Soybean
Urban Farm and Food

Vegetable and Fruit Sessions During Ag Week

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association of Delaware’s Annual Educational Meetings will be held January 9-11, 2023 as a part of Delaware Ag Week. A general schedule and session agendas are below.

GENERAL SCHEDULE OF FVGAD MEETINGS

Monday, January 9

Fruit Session 1:00 - 3:55 p.m.
Exhibit Hall Board Room

Tuesday, January 10

General Session 9:00 - 11:50 a.m.
Exhibit Hall

Fresh Market Session 1:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Exhibit Hall

Wednesday, January 11

Processing Vegetable Session 9:00 - 11:45 a.m.
Exhibit Hall

FVGAD Awards Luncheon noon - 2:00 p.m.
Harrington Raceway & Casino, Gold Room
RSVP by January 3 required

DETAILED FVGAD SESSION AGENDAS

FVGAD Fruit Session

Monday, January 9, 2023
Exhibit Hall Board Room

1:00-1:30 p.m.

Fruit Diseases to Look Out For

Jill Pollok, Plant Diagnostician, University of Delaware

1:30-2:00 p.m.

Freeze and Other Weather Impacts on Fruit Production

Don Seifrit, Extension Educator, Tree Fruit, Penn State University

2:00-2:30 p.m.

Fruit Enterprise Budgets

*Nate Bruce, Farm Business Management Specialist,
University of Delaware*

2:30-3:10 p.m.

**Experiences with Three Alternative Fruit Crops:
Physalis, Haskap and Aronia**

*Dr. Andrew Ristvey, Principal Agent & Extension
Specialist for Commercial Horticulture, University of
Maryland*

3:10-3:40 p.m.

**Updates on Berry Fruit Research; Finding Ways to
Mitigate Heat and Disease Stress**

*Dr. Kalpalatha Melmaiee, Associate Professor, Plant
Breeding and Molecular Genetics, Delaware State
University*

3:40-3:55 p.m.

Indoor Fruit Production Experiences

*Dr. Gordon Johnson, Extension Fruit and Vegetable
Specialist, University of Delaware
Bill Owens, Owens Premium Produce*

FVGAD General Session

Tuesday, January 10, 2023
Exhibit Hall

9:00-9:05 a.m.

Welcome

Shane Marvel, President FVGAD

9:05-9:20 a.m.

**Updates from the Delaware Department of
Agriculture on Produce Safety.**

*Amanda Ziegler, Food Safety Program Coordinator,
DDA*

9:20-9:45 a.m.

Current Issues in Produce Food Safety

*Dr. Kali Kniel, Professor of Microbial Food Safety,
University of Delaware*

9:45-10:00 a.m.

**Experiences in Retrofitting Watermelon Harvest
Buses to Improve Food Safety**

*Dr. Gordon Johnson, Extension Fruit and Vegetable
Specialist, University of Delaware
Jennifer Jones, Extension Program Assistant, Produce
Food Safety, University of Delaware*

10:00-10:30 a.m.

Using H2A Workers on Fruit and Vegetable Farms
H2A consultant, másLabor Group

10:30-11:00 a.m.

**What is Climate Smart Agriculture and How Does
it Impact Fruit and Vegetable Growers?**

*Dr. Emmalea Ernest, Scientist, Fruit and Vegetable
Program, University of Delaware*

11:00-11:25 a.m.

**Success with Biofumigation for Control of Soil
Borne Diseases**

*Dr. Gordon Johnson, Extension Fruit and Vegetable
Specialist, University of Delaware*

11:25-11:50 a.m.

New Crop Focus – Growing Baby Ginger

Shem Elias, Graduate Student, University of Delaware

FVGAD Fresh Market Vegetable Session

Tuesday, January 10, 2023
Exhibit Hall

1:00-1:30 p.m.

**A Decade of Applied Research in Fresh Market
Vegetables; New Project on Agrivoltaics**

*Dr. Gordon Johnson, Extension Fruit and Vegetable
Specialist, University of Delaware*

1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Updates on Diseases of Fresh Market Vegetables
and their Control**

*Dr. Andrew Wyenandt, Extension Specialist in
Vegetable Pathology, Rutgers University*

2:30-3:00 p.m.

**Keeping it Fresh - Insect Management Updates in
Fresh Market Vegetables**

*Dr. David Owens, Extension Specialist – Entomology,
University of Delaware*

3:00-3:20 p.m.

**Alternative Weed Control Strategies for Fresh
Market Vegetables**

*Dr. Mark VanGessel, Professor and Extension
Specialist - Weed Science, University of Delaware*

3:20- 3:40 p.m.

Fresh Market Vegetable Budgets

*Nate Bruce, Farm Business Management Specialist,
University of Delaware*

3:40-4:00 p.m.

**Research Updates on Pepper Shading and Pole
Lima Beans**

Dr. Emmalea Ernest, Scientist, Extension Fruit and Vegetable Program, University of Delaware

4:00-4:30 p.m.

Disease Management in High Tunnels

Dr. Rose Ogutu, Horticulture Specialist, Delaware State University

FVGAD Processing Vegetable Session

Wednesday, January 11, 2023
Exhibit Hall

9:00-9:05 a.m.

Welcome

Shane Marvel, President FVGAD

9:05-9:30 a.m.

A Decade of Applied Processing Vegetable Research; New Processing Vegetables Part 1

Dr. Gordon Johnson, Extension Fruit and Vegetable Specialist, University of Delaware

9:30-9:55 a.m.

Slimy Early and Late Season Pest Management

Dr. David Owens, Extension Entomologist, University of Delaware

9:55-10:15 a.m.

Weed Control for Processing Crops is Not Getting Easier with Palmer Amaranth and Herbicide Resistance

Dr. Mark VanGessel, Extension Weed Science Specialist, University of Delaware

10:15-10:45 a.m.

BREAK

10:45-11:05 a.m.

Root Knot Nematode Management Strategies in Processing Vegetables

Eboni Traverso, M.S. Student, University of Delaware

11:05-11:25 a.m.

Farm Financial Management Strategies for Rising Input Costs

Nate Bruce, Farm Business Management Specialist, University of Delaware

11:25-11:45 a.m.

Pea and Lima Trials; New Processing Vegetables Part 2

Dr. Emmalea Ernest, Scientist, Extension Fruit and Vegetable Program, University of Delaware

FVGAD Awards Luncheon and Business Meeting

Wednesday, January 11, 2023 noon - 2:00 p.m.
Harrington Raceway & Casino, Gold Room

All current FVGAD members are invited to attend free of charge, but must pay dues and RSVP by January 3, 2023 to guarantee a ticket

Tickets are \$35 for non-FVGAD Members.

To pay FVGAD Dues, RSVP for Luncheon or Purchase Tickets use this form.

Delaware Produce Safety Training

Wednesday, January 25, 2023 8:00-4:30
UD Carvel Research & Education Center
16483 County Seat Hwy, Georgetown, DE

What to Expect at the PSA Grower Training Course

The PSA Grower Training curriculum includes seven modules. For in-person courses, trainers will spend approximately seven hours of instruction time covering the curriculum content below.

- Introduction to Produce Safety
- Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
- Soil Amendments
- Wildlife, Domesticated Animals, and Land Use
- Agricultural Water (Part I: Production Water; Part II: Postharvest Water)
- Postharvest Handling and Sanitation

In addition to learning about produce safety best practices, parts of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements are outlined within each module. There will be time for questions and discussion, so participants should come prepared to share their experiences and produce safety questions.

Register for the training via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/january-25-2023-produce-safety-alliance-psa-grower-training-tickets-453291786937>

Call 302-856-7303 if you have questions about this training.

***Weekly Crop Update is compiled and edited
by Emmalea Ernest, Scientist - Vegetable
Crops***

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