

Program Highlights
Community and Commercial Horticulture, Ag Issues

Commercial Ag Production and Marketing

Vegetables, ornamental horticulture-(floriculture, nursery, turfgrass and greenhouse) production and horticultural business management – Program Effort 50%

Pasture Walk for Equine and Livestock Owners Equine and Livestock Educator, Audrey Reith, and I co-taught a program on soil fertility and weed identification. Participants learned the benefits of soil testing and nutrient management, how to take and submit soil samples from their fields, to identify and control common grasses, weeds and plants toxic to horses and livestock. Held on June 2, 1-4 PM at Loosetrife Farm in Kerhonkson, this was an in-field, hands on, program including demonstration and discussion. Twenty three participants attended.

Zone Tillage Twilight Meeting- This meeting for commercial farmers was held on July 2nd at Gill Farms in Hurley. Gill farms recently purchased an eight row zone tiller and I have been working with them assessing soil health on the farm. Zone tillage is a reduced tillage method that is gradually gaining prominence in the Northeast. This method minimizes the adverse effects of intensive farming on the environment and improves the quality of the soil. Speakers included Cornell Veg Team specialists Charles Bornt and Jim Capron. In addition, three area growers using zone tillage shared their experience with this system. Growers learned about the benefits to soil structure, plant health, effects on weed populations and savings in diesel and labor from fewer passes through the field using zone tillage as compared to conventional tillage. Thirty growers attended the program. I am collaborating with the Cornell Reduced Tillage Project to develop programs in the Hudson Valley. The goal of the project is to increase the profitable use of reduced tillage systems for vegetables, and to help growers overcome some of the challenges inherent in adopting reduced tillage systems, and demonstrate that these systems improve soil quality, maintain yields, and reduce costs.

Vegetable Pests Twilight Meeting- This program is coming up on August 5th at Tantillo Farms in Gardiner. This is an important annual growers program at which we discuss timely pest management issues growers are facing. Specialists from Cornell University, NYS IPM and Hudson Valley Extension educators and growers attend.

Christmas Tree Growers Twilight Meeting- To be held at Hurd's Farm in Modena on August 6th. This is another annual meeting that I organize in conjunction with Cornell Extension Hudson Valley Horticulture Team. Each year we invite a guest speaker to cover topic(s) at growers' request. This year we will focus on weed control options in new and established Christmas tree plantations.

Farmland Preservation- I am assisting ag landowners and municipalities in the application process for the Ag & Markets Farmland Protection Grants program (AKA Purchase of Devolvement Rights).

Community Horticulture

Supervise and provide leadership for the Community Horticulture- Program Effort 25%

Rain Garden Update -The first rain garden installation is completed at the Town of Ulster, Town Hall. With the assistance of the Town of Ulster Highway Dept., Master Gardeners and Rutgers Extension staff, we excavated the site on May 13 and installed our first rain garden there on May 22. The garden is approximately 300 square feet and is designed to contain and slowly infiltrate storm water off the building roof, back into the ground where it belongs. The building is located close to the Sawkill Creek which is subject to flooding. The rain garden is a small but positive step in storm water runoff mitigation.