

Don't Be A Couch Potato: Come To Penn State's Trial Gardens Tour, Sample New Vegetable Varieties

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Backyard gardeners, gourmets, and any person with an interest in vegetables can find out how to produce, cook, and serve great produce at Penn State's All-America Selection Vegetable Tour, Aug. 24, at the Penn State Trial Gardens.

The gardens are located at the corner of Bigler Road and Park Avenue, on the University Park campus.

"The trial gardens are test plots where we grow new vegetable varieties to see if they are reliable, vigorous, productive and show distinct improvements over other varieties that are currently in use," said Peter Ferretti, professor of vegetable crops in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

The event begins at 9 a.m. with registration and refreshments. At 10 a.m., Ferretti will lead a tour through the vegetable plots, highlighting such fruits and vegetables as fall peas, peppers, squash, melons, pumpkins,

tomatoes, cabbage and ornamental (and edible) chard. "We have many varieties of each vegetable," Ferretti said. "For instance, we have cherry, bush, plum and vine tomatoes that are red, orange and yellow."

Visitors will get a chance to photograph and sample vegetables during the tour. At noon, participants will reconvene at the nearby Beaver Picnic Pavilion for a catered buffet luncheon, where samples of the most promising vegetable varieties will be served in various side dishes.

At 1 p.m., Ferretti will offer gardening and production advice for each variety as well as food preparation ideas. Alison Harmon, senior extension associate in food science, will discuss their nutritional aspects. Luke Laborde, assistant professor of food science, will address food safety issues associated with vegetable handling and preparation.

A round table discussion on various vegetable topics is scheduled from 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

A \$25 registration fee includes materials and the catered lunch. Registration slots are limited, so early registration is recommended. For more information, or to request registration materials, call Peter Ferretti at (814) 863-2313 or the Conferences and Short Courses Office at (814) 865-8301. A block of rooms at the Autoport Motel is being held. To reserve a room (\$57 for a single and \$67 for a double), call (800) 932-7678.

Registrations will be accepted by mail or fax through Aug. 17. The fax number for the Conferences and Short Courses Office is (814) 865-7050. Checks should be made payable to Penn State. Completed registration forms and payment should be mailed to AAS Vegetable Tour, The Pennsylvania State University, 306 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA, 16802-2601.

Get Lost, See Monsters, Get Crop Tips At Ag Progress Days

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Visitors to Penn State's Ag Progress Days, Aug. 15-17, can get lost in a corn maze, enter a monster weed in the "Largest Weed in Pennsylvania Contest," and learn about the latest improvements in forage and crop production at the Crops and Soils Area on East 5th Street here at the Ag Progress Days site.

"This year's 'A Maze 'N Corn' is four times larger than last year's, and it's wheelchair- and baby-stroller accessible," said Marvin Hall, associate professor of forage management and coordinator for the area.

If there were a contest for growing weeds, do you think you'd win hands down? Now's your chance to show all of Pennsylvania your biggest weed. Enter the "Largest Weed in Pennsylvania Contest" by bringing your entry in one of the two categories — broadleaf or grass — to the Crops and Soils Tent before noon any day of Ag Progress Days. Prizes will be awarded daily.

Rules include: 1) only two weeds per person, 2) weeds must be grown in Pennsylvania, and 3) weeds must be cut off at soil level (no roots).

This year's demonstration plots, located outside the tent, include the latest technology in weed control, herbicide-resistant corn and soybeans, and management of corn, soybeans, small grains and forage crops.

Inside the tent, visitors can see exhibits and demonstrations from Penn State, the Corn Growers Association and the Forage Growers Association. "The display of common weeds of Pennsylvania always is a big attraction," said Hall. "We have live weeds in pots, and specialists on hand to answer your questions on controlling specific weeds. If you have strange weeds on your property, dig them up and bring them in, and the specialists will identify them."

Other exhibits explore crop production and management, soil fertility and testing, nutrient management and pest control.

While at the tent, farmers can find solutions to problems with soil fertility, diseases, insects, corn, forages, small grains and tillage practices by asking agronomy specialists from Penn State and the Pennsylvania Crop Management Association.

Visitors also can test their agronomic knowledge with the agronomy quiz board with questions about small

grains, soybeans, corn, forage, and soil fertility.

The Hay Show will display the state's best hay samples. Growers who would like to enter the show are invited to bring samples to the Hay Show drop-off point near the Ag Progress Days east entrance by 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 15. All growers will receive the results of their hay evaluation.

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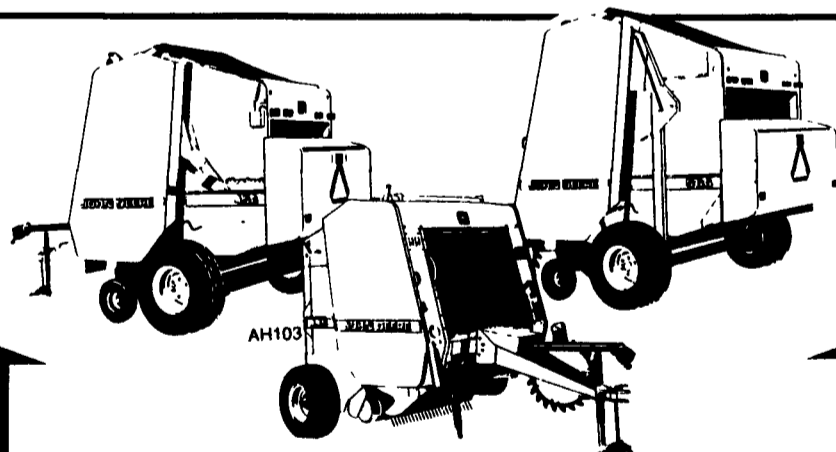
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Managing Stormwater

COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — The location of the second annual series by Penn State Cooperative Extension on "Natural Landscapes and Habitats" will be Byers' Choice in Chalfont, starting at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 22.

Instead of mowed bowls for retention basins, Byers has two quarter-acre stormwater ponds landscaped with native aquatics and wetlands shrubs. This state-of-the-art stormwater management system not only does its job well, it looks magnificent and provides habitat for wetland wildlife such as frogs, fish, and herons.

Any property owner with stormwater management needs may be interested in learning how to turn a "problem" into an attractive asset.

Space is limited at some of the locations. To receive a walk schedule and registration form, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Recycling Education Program, Natural Landscapes & Habitat Walks, 1015 Bridge Road, Suite H, Collegeville, PA 19426, or call the Recycling Education Program at (610) 489-4315.