UConn Extension and Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

CROP TALK

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UCONN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

EXTENSION & PLANT SCIENCE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

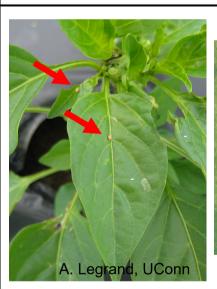


Sticky Situations in Pest Monitoring: Pest or Beneficial Insect?

Dr. Ana Legrand, Extension Assistant Professor, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, UConn

Monitoring for pest problems is an essential part of integrated pest management. The information gathered through these efforts allows us to make informed decisions about pesticide use and other control tactics. Most importantly, regular monitoring can give us an early warning about potential problems. There are many ways to monitor pests, ranging from hands-on plant inspections to using insect pheromone traps. Scouting methods and tools are as varied as the pests themselves. Pest fact sheets usually provide information on how to monitor for a given insect pest. Often, we first encounter signs of pest presence before we see the actual culprit. Some insects excel at making our search a bit harder by only showing up at night, like the Asiatic garden beetle, or by hiding in soil burrows like cutworms. Potential marks of a pest include egg-laying scars, eggs, feeding damage, and some form of body waste! One challenge in monitoring is deciding whether you found signs of a pest or of a beneficial insect. Below are some examples of beneficial insect evidence to help you this season. And remember, important monitoring tools to have include a 15-30x magnifying lens, baggies to collect suspicious specimens, flags or flagging tape to mark trouble spots, and scouting forms to record results. Nowadays, a cell phone is another handy tool for its camera, access to pest identification resources and scouting apps.

Signs of Beneficial Insect Presence





These are **'aphid mummies'** – the result of parasitoids attacking the aphids. Keep these 'mummies' around because out of each one a small parasitoid wasp will emerge to get more aphids for you. Aphid mummies are spherical, appear papery and can be brown, tan or golden in color.



A **hover or flower fly pupa**. Hover flies are predators as larvae. They consume aphids and other soft-bodied insects. Larvae transform into the adult flies during the pupal stage.

Adults are not predaceous. They consume honeydew, nectar, pollen and water.



This cross-striped cabbageworm has been attacked by **Cotesia parasitoids**. Parasitoid larvae emerged, see wounds in yellow stripe, and the attached white cocoons protect the developing parasitoids. The caterpillar will not survive.



Cluster of **ladybird beetle eggs**. These yellow eggs are usually found near aphid colonies. Ladybird beetle larvae and adults prey on aphids and other softbodied insects.



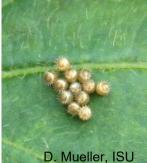
These are **lacewing eggs**. Lacewing eggs are very small white structures attached to plant surfaces by a thin filament. Lacewing larvae are awesome predators while the adults feed on nectar and pollen.





Two **Cotesia** parasitoid species attack the imported cabbageworm. One species develops as a single larva in the caterpillar producing a single white cocoon. The other species has several larvae developing within the host caterpillar – see yellowish cocoons. In both cases, the result is a dead cabbageworm.





Tight clusters of barrel-shaped eggs are typical of stink bugs. **Predatory spined soldier bug eggs** have spine-like projections around the top rim. Egg color varies including cream, dark gray and golden shades. Small nymphs gather by the eggs after hatching but soon they will be off to hunt for prey.

Managing Shore Flies on Your Vegetable Transplants

Leanne Pundt, Extension Educator, UConn

Shore fly adults are a nuisance pest in the greenhouse that do not feed directly on vegetable transplants. Shore fly larvae feed upon algae. However, their frass (droppings) on plants are unsightly and in large numbers they can be a nuisance to workers. Shore fly larvae may also help spread soil-borne pathogens.

Shore fly adults may be confused with dark-winged fungus gnats that are common in the moist greenhouse environment.



Figure 1: Adult fungus gnats compared to adult shore flies on a yellow sticky card.

Shore fly adults are about 1/8 of an inch long with a robust body and short legs and antennae. Each shore fly wing has about five or six distinctive white or light-colored spots on each wing. Adult fungus gnats are long legged delicate flies. They have long legs, a clear pair of wings, and long beaded antennae.



Figure 2: Adult shore flies resting on pepper transplants. Photo by L. Pundt

Shore flies are stronger fliers than fungus gnats and may be seen resting on plant leaves. They tend to fly upwards when disturbed.

Figure 3: Shore fly droppings (frass) on basil seedlings. Photo by L. Pundt

Adult shore flies lay up to 300 white, oblong eggs in algae or in very wet areas. Eggs hatch into first stage larvae with two forked breathing tubes at their rear. The pupae are found near algal mats. Shore flies develop from egg to adult in about two weeks. Adults can live for two to three weeks.

All life stages of shore flies can be found on or near algae, their food source. Eliminate puddling water on greenhouse floors. Avoid over watering transplants, so that the upper media surface dries out between irrigations. Make sure the greenhouse is well ventilated.

Beneficial nematodes can suppress shore fly larvae. Some growers are using repeated sprenches with Steinernema carpocapsae (Millenium) at high rates to suppress shore flies. (The nematode species Steinernema feltiae (Nemasys, Nemashield) is used against fungus gnat larvae).

Repeated applications of insect growth regulators can be used against the shore fly larvae. See the latest edition the New England Floricultural Crop Pest Management and Growth Regulations Guide: A Management Guide for Insects, Diseases, Weeds and Growth Regulators available online at https://greenhouseguide.cahnr.uconn.edu/ or the New England Vegetable Management Guide at https://nevegetable.org/vegetable-transplant-production.



Fireblight Tree Fruit Update

Evan Lentz – Assistant Extension Educator – Fruit Production and IPM

Introduction to Fireblight

After a few weeks of visiting with fruit growers in the state, it's clear that Fireblight remains one of the top concerns for the fruit industry. This disease, caused by the bacterium Erwinia amylovora, is both highly destructive and infectious, making informed disease management efforts a top priority. As the growing season ramps up, it's important to revisit this disease's existing management considerations while incorporating new research from our regional IPM team members including the discovery of Streptomycin-resistant Fireblight.

Disease Cycle, Signs, and Symptoms

Erwinia amylovora overwinters in cankers formed on the trunks and branches of infected trees (PICTURE). Plants belonging to the *Rosaceae* (Rose) family are susceptible. This includes apple (*Malus*), pear (*Pyrus*), hawthorn (*Crataegus*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), quince (*Cydonia*), chokeberry (*Aronia*), mountain ash (*Sorbus*), and many others. These cankers excrete a tan bacterial ooze, which serves as inoculum for both initial and re-infection and often can go unnoticed until other symptoms present later in the season.

Fig. 1. Shepherd's crook shoot tip. Fireblight on Apple (A.L. Jones, UNH)

Initial infections rely on entry through wounds or natural openings such as flowers during bloom. This disease is easily spread – vectored by wind, rain, insects, or tools and equipment used in orchard management.

The most readily identifiable symptom is the characteristic "shepherd's crook", where shoots tips die and begin to curl back on themselves, appearing burnt (Figure 1). Flowers also show symptoms of infection, starting with a water-soaked appearance and eventually shriveling up and turning brown or black. Infected fruits follow this same pattern. If left untreated, this disease will kill the entire tree.

How is it currently managed?

<u>Resistant/Tolerant Cultivars</u> – Some resistant cultivars are available. Although not an option for existing orchards, some may want to consider this option when establishing new blocks of trees.

<u>Monitoring</u> – This is perhaps the most important part of your management plan and your most effective tool in preventing blossom infections. Two disease forecasting models, MaryBlyt and CougarBlight, are available to inform you spray decisions.

Chemical Control:

<u>Copper</u> – Copper is an early season material that kills bacteria on the plants surface. This is an effective way to reduce the overall population of Erwinia amylovora in an orchard for 2-3 weeks, depending on weather conditions.

Taken from the New England Tree Fruit Management Guide:

"There are many copper formulations. Apply a minimum of 2 lb. of metallic copper per acre. If in doubt about how much metallic copper a product contains, use the high label rate recommended at silver to green tip. Copper may be used with oil (1 qt./100 gal.), which can act as a spreader/sticker for the copper. Because copper sprays are meant to suppress the population of E. amylovora in an entire orchard, spray the whole orchard, not just the most susceptible cultivars or places where fire blight has occurred in the past."

<u>Antibiotics</u> – Antibiotics should be applied during bloom when forecasting systems signal a high risk for infection. Antibiotics are also to be used after a trauma event, such as hail.

Cultural Management:

<u>Pruning</u> – Prune out infected branches. Cuts should be made at least 8 inches below any visible damage.

<u>Sanitation</u> – Pruning tools need to be disinfected between each pruning cut so that the infection is not spread from cut to cut. A 70% alcohol or 10% bleach solution will provide an acceptable level of sanitation.

<u>Fertilization</u> – Avoid overfertilization. Large amounts of nitrogen can lead to excessive vegetative growth and succulent green tissue, increasing the plant's susceptibility to infection.

Streptomycin-Resistant Fireblight

Numerous samples from around the Northeast United States, specifically in western New York state, have tested positive for resistance to Streptomycin, one of the few materials that are effective at controlling Fireblight. This is due to 50+ years of sustained use in orchards. Figure 2 shows the locations in New York where Strep-resistant Fireblight has been confirmed over the past three years (2020-2022)



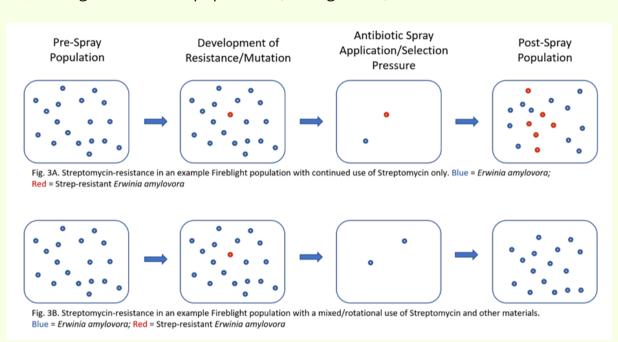
locations (I. Yannuzzi, Cornell)

From Dr. Quan Zeng at CAES:

"48 samples were collected in 2022 from orchards in CT, NH, and NY (Hudson valley). The fire blight pathogen Erwinia amylovora was isolated and tested on media supplemented with streptomycin at the concentration of 100ug/ml. All strains were tested negative for streptomycin resistance in 2022. We will continue to test in the coming years. If you have samples that you wish to be tested, please send your samples (fresh samples with ooze preferred) to Dr. Quan Zeng, Plant Pathology JW106, 123 Huntington Street, New Haven, CT. If you would like a farm visit, please contact Dr. Quan Zeng at 832-671-3499."

What is Pest Resistance?

Pest resistances often arise when a mutation that confers some level of resistance occurs to a single individual in a population. Repeated use of a single material, such as Streptomycin, works to diminish the individuals in the population without the mutation while allowing the individual(s) with the mutation to grow and multiply, unchecked. This is what is called a selection pressure. Over time, more and more individuals in the population will have the mutation, leading to a resistant population (See Figure 3A)..



However, these mutations are very rare, and it takes time for the mutations to build up in a population. Utilizing more than one material, usually with a different mode-of-action, will ensure that individuals with resistance to the first material are reduced and the proliferation of the mutation remains minimal (See Figure 3B). This is how selection pressure can be effectively reduced and why it is suggested to rotate or mix materials often whether the pest is a weed, insect, or bacterium.

<u>How can we manage Strep-resistant Fireblight</u>? *Recommendations from Dr. Kerik Cox at Cornell and Dr. Quan Zeng at the Connecticut agricultural Experiment Station*.

<u>Pre-season</u>:

- Prune out the cankers.
- Dilute delayed-dormant Fixed Copper application at silvertip (15% MCE, metallic copper equivalent). Ensure proper coverage à Calibrate your sprayers.

Tight Cluster - Pink:

- Early Prohexadione Ca (PhCa) 6oz/100 gal OR 2oz/100 gal + 1oz/100 gal ASM (Actigard)
- Start defense inducers at Pink

<u>Bloom</u>:

Use NEWA model or consultant/Extension for Fireblight infection periods.

Models may overpredict infection risk. Shouldn't need more than 3 applications; really

only

1 well-timed application.

EIP Thresholds & Bactericides Selection

- EIP > 100: Streptomycin or Kasugamycin
- EIP 40-70: Oxytetracycline or a biological

If you do not have Strep-resistant Fireblight:

- It is still important to protect yourself against developing resistance.
- Rotate antibiotics at Bloom:
 - Mix Streptomycin and Oxytetracycline at the full rate
 - Alternate with Kasugamycin
 - Apply on cloudy days or in the evening
- Alternate with Oxytetracycline (unless you used it in the mix), copper (if it's safe to do so), or biologicals (Blossom Protect, etc. [slight chance of russeting under humid conditions])

If you do have Strep-resistant Fireblight:

- Rotate materials at Bloom:
 - Kasugamycin (Kasumin 2L) at 64 fl oz/A in 100 gallons
 - Blossom Protect (1.25 lbs/A + 8.75 Buffer Protect) applied twice at 70-90% Bloom (slight change of russeting under humid conditions)
 - Oxytetracycline or other biopesticide/copper at the highest rate
 - Might need to make more applications à Use NEWA forecasts, apply prior to EIP of 60-100 during wet weather at bloom.
 - Make applications at night if possible.

Note: Blossom Protect has a slight chance of causing russeting under humid conditions. Blossom Protect is also sensitive to scab fungicides therefore cannot be used together with such materials. Application of fungicides at petal fall may eliminate Blossom Protect yeast and reduce russeting.

Post-Bloom, Petal Fall:

Prohexadione Ca – Apply 6 oz/100 gal (or 2 oz/100 + 1 oz/100 gal ASM; Actigard) at petal fall and 10-14 days later

Post-Bloom & Summer:

<u>Copper</u> (protectant and organic only) – can cause fruit russet. Only use if you're concerned about losing trees to the disease. Apply on a sunny, dry day. This will only protect against the bacteria already on the plant's surface. As the plant grows, new tissue will not be protected. Repeat applications at a low rate will be needed until terminal bud set. <u>Pruning</u> – remove strikes/blighted branches promptly on a cool, dry day. Prune into last season's growth (at least 12" into healthy tissue. For younger trees, if 12" is into the main scaffold of the tree à remove and replant.

<u>Rescue Program</u> – apply PhCa 6-12 oz/100 gal, wait 5 days, and prune every two weeks until terminal bud set.

We are hopeful that with these strategies further development of antibiotic resistance in Fireblight populations can be mitigated. For more information, please visit the sites below or contact your local Extension or CAES offices.

Additional resources:

https://netreefruit.org/apples/diseases/fire-blight

https://portal.ct.gov/CAES/Fact-Sheets/Plant-Pathology/Fire-Blight

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hi9guUp0Ho

https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7414.html

https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C871&title=fireblightsymptoms-causes-and-treatment#Management

Support:

Evan Lentz - CT Fruit and IPM Specialist - evan.lentz@uconn.edu

Dr. Quan Zeng - CT Fireblight Expert - Quan.Zeng@ct.gov

Cabbage Whitefly: An Emerging Pest in New England

Dr. Shuresh Ghimire, Assistant Extension Educator - Vegetable Specialist, UConn

Cabbage Whitefly (*Aleyrodes proletella*) is an emerging pest in New England. It is naturally present in parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. Also known as brassica whitefly, the main hosts are kale, Brussels sprout, cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli. The alternative hosts are turnip, mustard, alfalfa, fava bean and dandelion. In the last 2-3 seasons, cabbage whitefly has been reported by growers in southern New England as a pest of significance.

Identification





Figure 1. Adults are small (1/16th of an inch) with white wings, and have two gray blotches on each forewing. Eggs are laid in a half-moon or circular pattern on the undersides of leaves (*top right photo*). Immature stages are flat and scale-like (*bottom photo*). Both adults and nymphs feed on plant sap. The adult whitefly are not strong fliers, but they can be spread long distances by the wind. (Photo credits: Oregon Dept. of Agriculture*top left and bottom*, and ICP1/035/1606)

Biology

In places with cold winters like New England, cabbage whiteflies overwinter as adult females. The number of pest generations per year will depend on the ambient temperatures. Egg to adult development takes 9-12 weeks at 59 °F and 3-5 weeks at 68 °F. Females may survive for more than a month in the summer and can producer more than 300 eggs in a lifetime. The overwintering stage can survive exposure to temperatures around -4 °F for short periods and 23 °F for several days. However, egg laying stops below 50 °F.

Monitoring

Early detection is very important. Yellow sticky cards can be used for monitoring (rather than actual control), but outdoors the cards will also trap non-target insects like bees. Monitor seedlings by inspecting the underside of the oldest leaves regularly for adult whitefly and eggs.





Figure 2. Yellow sticky cards are effective for monitoring whitefly (Photo: Hort Dev Co. UK).

Management

Row covers have been shown to reduce whitefly infestations by up to 71% when applied season-long in trials on Brussels sprout. Fine mesh netting (0.8 x 0.8mm) reduced or delayed infestation, even with periodic cover removal for weeding.

Encarsia formosa is a biocontrol commercially available that will attack >15 species of whitefly including cabbage whitefly. In addition, generalist predators of aphids such as hoverfly and lacewing larvae will exploit whiteflies in the absence of their primary prey.

There are a number of possible insecticide products to control whitefly. However, since whitefly colonies are typically found on the undersides of leaves, they pose a difficult target for the application of spray chemicals with a contact mode of action. Where whitefly levels are very high, numbers could be reduced first with a good coverage of an insecticidal soap such as M-Pede, then with a systemic insecticide such as imidacloprid e.g., Admire Pro. Repeated applications may be needed to prevent continuing infestations on new foliage and spread to other plants. Seed treatments with systemic insecticides may provide a certain level of whitefly control, particularly early in the life of crop.

Low Tunnels for Urban Growers

Jacqueline Kowalski, Urban Agriculture Associate Extension Educator, UConn Sara Risko, WCSU Intern

This year, the irregular spring weather patterns remind us to expect the unexpected. Despite how unseasonably warm it has been, it is always possible for late-spring low temperatures. Installing low tunnels can provide temperature protection while warming the soil; speeding up harvest time and increasing crop cycles. While seasonal high tunnels have become the norm for many farmers, low tunnels can be a viable option for those without the space for a high tunnel.

What are seasonal low tunnels?

Low tunnels are temporary structures that are generally 2-4 ft. tall hoops covering one row of crops or raised bed. Its hoops are covered with either plastic or a spunbonded polypropylene fabric with either anchored or buried edges to prevent covers from blowing off. They are generally used for one season and then removed. Low tunnels can be placed over already planted crops or before establishing new crops. However, it is important to note that the ground should be prepared before planting, as it is very difficult to do so afterward.



Figure 1. PVC pipe hoops over a raised bed



Figure 2. Metal hoops covered with frost cover

Why are low tunnels used?

Low tunnels can provide many of the same benefits that high tunnels do. The soil will warm up faster, and the environment within the tunnel will be warmer. Low tunnels can also protect plants from excessive spring or fall rains and can be used in places that are too small to fit high tunnels.

What are low tunnels made of?

The frame may be constructed from either wire (6- or 9-gauge), PVC, or galvanized electrical conduit. The ends of wire hoops can be pushed directly into the soil. Hoop structures can be formed from metal conduit using a hoop bender (sold by specialty market garden suppliers). For PVC or metal hoops, rebar can be pounded in the soil where the hoops will be located and the ends of the PVC or metal placed over the rebar to stabilize the hoop. The covering is generally made of slit or perforated transparent polyethylene film and semitransparent spun-bonded plastic fabrics of varying thicknesses. Thicker material provides greater temperature protection, however, the greater thickness the more expensive it may be. Baling twine or bungie cords are used to secure the plastic along and in between the hoops. The edges of the material are anchored down with sandbags, bags of rocks, or soil along the edges and ends.

What are some advantages to seasonal low tunnels vs. high tunnels?

The most obvious advantage to seasonal low tunnels as opposed to high tunnels is the lower cost involved with installation and maintenance. The removal of the low tunnels may help with soil health by allowing for easier crop rotations and prevent long term buildup of salinity.

In the summer, the covers can be replaced with a shade cloth to keep crops cool or with insect covering to protect crops from insect damage.

For more information on construction and use of low tunnels see:

Low Tunnel Benefits and Opportunities for Specialty Crops in Missouri // Missouri Produce Growers Bulletin // Integrated Pest Management, University of Missouri

Low Tunnels for Season Extension in Oregon: Design, Construction and Costs | OSU Extension Service (oregonstate.edu)

Solid Ground Updates



The Solid Ground program is taking a bit of a hiatus from our trainings for new and beginning farmers as the frenzy of summer months comes upon us, but we still have tools that we are providing for our farmers! Back again, for another season, our <u>FREE One-on-One</u> <u>Consultations</u> with Ag professionals are available to new and beginning commercial farmers in the state right now! These consultations are for farm businesses and priority will be given to new farmers with less than 10 years of experience,

These consultations are with professionals in the fields of vegetable production, hemp production, livestock production and management, soil health and land use, conservation practices, and urban agriculture. When requested, each professional schedules a time to visit your farm in person and look at the specific issues that you may be dealing with at the moment, giving you tailored advice and support for your farm operation. There is also the opportunity for follow up phone calls, email, and even video to make sure that you are supported fully in implementing any practices that may be new to you or to address follow up questions.

Farmers that utilized the consultants last year gained some good knowledge that helped with their operations. For instance,

"...The most valuable advice turned out to be about our grazing management, which was something we didn't anticipate. I appreciated the flexibility of being able to walk our fields with Joe...We changed our grazing plan for the rest of the season, and it will impact the way we will graze this upcoming season as well."

"I like the one-on-one time that the farmer gets, especially for a newer farmer, who doesn't have a mentor, having the time to pick someone's brain was great."

There are a limited number of these consults available, so we encourage farmers to sign up for them ASAP and schedule them at whatever time feels most convenient for their farming operation during the summer months. Sign up now at https://newfarms.uconn.edu/consultations/

These consultations are made possible by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2020-70017-32733.

Put Local on Your Tray: Funding for Farm to School Ignites Opportunity



There has never been a time where it made so much sense for local farms and schools districts to! Recent policy initiatives to extend Universal School Meals, efforts to make funding permanent for the CT Grown for CT Kids grant program and ongoing COVID relief funding to districts has set a bountiful table for farm to school efforts!

Starting this spring, the CT department of Education will be disseminating **nearly \$1.9 MILLION to districts across the state.** The 'Local Food for Schools Incentive Program' funded through the USDA, is **explicitly for the purchase of locally grown** fruits, vegetables, added-value dairy, meat, maple, honey and lightly processed products.

<u>Put Local on Your Tray can help!</u> Our <u>Farm to</u> <u>School Directory</u> is designed to help school food services and farmers get started with the right information. We can also offer one-one support to navigate a new school connection.





Announcements:

Funding Opportunity Apprenticeship and Mentor Pilot Apprenticeship and Mentor Pilot Program for Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Color Application Deadline: May 1, 2023 at 4:00pm Ned Lamont, Governor Brvan P. Hurlburt, Commissione Connecticut Department of Agriculture 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 703, Hartford, CT 06103



Deadline to apply: May 1, 2023 at 4pm Details: shorturl.at/gisy1

For Connecticut specialty crop farms and agricultural non-profits to host and mentor a BIPOC apprentice(s) for the 2023 growing season.

Click the application above for Guidelines **Mentorship Application Apprentice** Application

The Connecticut Pomological Society

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Summer Fruit Grower Field Day

Date: Tuesday, June 13 Time: 4 pm – 8 pm Location: Belltown Hill Orchards,

483 Matson Hill Rd, S. Glastonbury, CT

Everyone is welcome. Field day with equipment companies and vendors beginning at 4 pm, followed by dinner at 6 pm, and a short educational meeting. Pesticide credits applied for. Free, however registration will be required for food planning. Stay tuned.



FARM FIELD Market Market Son Hill Farm 10 JUNE 1, 1-4 PM CECARELLIS HARRISON HILL FARM 186 Old Post RD Northford, CT 06472

- Zone tiller
- No-till drill
- Roller crimper
- No-till corn planter
- Low-till corn planter

Free to attend; registration required for headcount to provide refreshments

Register at: s.uconn.edu/fieldday

For more information, contact: Shuresh.Ghimire@uconn.edu

- Plastic layer
- Plus other customized implements that fit the need for small farms



Participating Organizations:



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JOIN UCONN CAHNR LISTENING SESSIONS

UConn's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resource is hosting farmer listening sessions! We would like to hear from you on the challenges you face, and support you would like to see UConn provide.

We will be presenting intitial results from our producer survey and then open the floor up to all of you.

The listening sessions will be held on:

- Wednesday, April 26th, at 7pm
- Tuesday, May 2nd, at 7pm

You can register for a virtual listening session directly at this <u>Registration Link</u>

MORE INFORMATION

https://are.uconn.edu/listening-sessions/

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

EXTENSION

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EXTENSION & PLANT SCIENCE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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