



## September 2023

Brett Wolff, Editor  
Christy Cassady, Editor/Designer

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### Coming up

**Oct. 8** - Finding a Farm Job 101. 1-2:30 p.m., virtual. Free online course designed for people who are entering the field. Learn about common industry standards, different types of jobs and internships, cultural norms and expectations, where to search for farm jobs, employee rights and safety, and more! Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association workshop. To register, [click here](#).

**Oct. 12** - MarketReady Buyer Tour, Louisville. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. ET. For details, visit <https://marketready.uky.edu/events>.

**Oct. 16** - Maple syrup workshop, Boone County Environmental and Nature Center, Union, KY. For details and to register, see **Page 7**.

# Forest farming resources abound through coalition

*By Christy Cassady, University of Kentucky Center for Crop Diversification*

Are you interested in forest farming, including production of syrup, mushrooms, medicinal herbs, decorative forest products for crafts, or other non-timber forest products (NTFPs)? Then look at the extensive library of resources and learning opportunities available from [The Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmer Coalition \(ABFFC\)](#).

The ABFFC, which was initiated in 2014, is a network of forest farmers, universities, and governmental and non-governmental organizations that work to improve forest farming opportunities for growers through education and networking. The ABFFC promotes stewardship of existing plant populations and trains landowners to cultivate high-value specialty crops within their forests.

The ABFFC has been funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's [Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program](#). University partners include Virginia Tech, North Carolina State University, Penn State University, and Warren Wilson College. John Munsell, professor and forest management extension specialist in the Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech is the project director. Margaret Bloomquist, a research scholar in Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University is the associate director.

"The work of the ABFFC's partners has reached thousands of existing and aspiring forest farmers and wild stewards in Appalachia over the past decade," Bloomquist said. "The network continues to grow and remains based on a strong foundation of collaboration and participatory approaches."

**Continued on Page 2**

## Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties. Cooperating. Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

## Continued from Page 1

Membership in the coalition is free, and provides hands-on workshops and support, forest farming resources, including help accessing free and reduced rate seed distribution programs, connections to other growers, a growing body of technical service providers, a forest farmer to forest farmer mentorship program, and a Forest Farming Footnotes newsletter to those who join the coalition's email list. Go to <https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/membership> for details and to join.

Resources on the coalition's website include publications on a variety of topics, ranging from Forest Farming and Non-Timber Forest Products to specific plants such as goldenseal and black cohosh, and a [forest farming video library](#) with more than 180 videos, including such topics as Forest Farming Medicinal and Decorative Plants for Market Sale, Value-Added Production – Teas, Salves, and More, a Forest Farming Beekeeping Series, Forest Farming Maple Syrup, and Forest Farming Ramps. The coalition also offers webinars and webinar recordings, and [technical assistance trainings](#) for university, extension, and agency personnel. A [Forest Farming Office Hours Series](#) allows anyone interested in learning more about forest farming to join N.C. State Extension personnel and friends of the ABFFC online for questions and answers, updates, and conversations about forest farming. The next office hours session is scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup> from noon to 1:30 p.m. Eastern Time. You must register in advance to receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting. To register, [click here](#). Also coming up soon (October 26<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time) is a Forest Farming Series webinar on goldenseal. For more information and to register, visit <https://extension.psu.edu/forest-farming-series-goldenseal>.

In June, the Appalachian Regional Commission awarded a \$490,647 Appalachian Regional Ini-

tiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) grant to Virginia Tech to support a planning project, "Accelerating Forest Farming in Central Appalachia: Strengthening Market Connections and Collaboration for Long-Term Sector Impact and Sustainability." The project is designed to grow forest farming businesses and the NTFP supply chain in Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. Virginia Tech is collaborating on the project with 11 organizations across these six states, including N.C. State University,

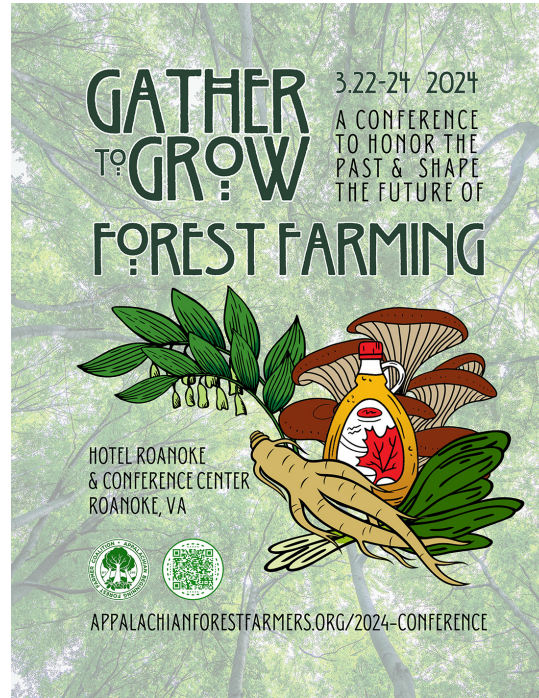
Grow Appalachia (a strategic initiative of Berea College), and the Organic Association of Kentucky. Jeanine Davis, associate professor and extension specialist in Horticultural Science at N.C. State, and her staff will lead that university's component of the project with a focus on production issues and increasing supplies of planting stock.

After years of working to help forest farmers, the ABFFC is set to evolve into the American Forest Farming Association in 2024, which will allow its extensive efforts to continue after current grant funding ends.

"The current momentum for forest farming is palpable, we are excited to see what becomes of these efforts that bring together many walks of people, types of organizations, and multidisciplinary approaches, as we move into national and international conversations for further growth *under the canopy*," Bloomquist said.

Registration will be opening soon for the 2024 Forest Farming Conference, scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> in Roanoke, VA. The conference will feature keynote speakers, working group meetings, field tours, exhibitors, and more. For details, visit <https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/2024-conference>.

To check out the ABFFC's wealth of resources, visit <https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org>, and be sure to visit its [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.





# GROWING YOUR FARM AND FOOD BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

Join KCARD staff and partners for a workshop focused on how to grow your agribusiness with topics including business planning, funding, and more!

November 9th Caldwell County	November 14th Clay County	December 5th & 7th Virtual
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Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development



## Expect a warmer, drier than average start to October in Kentucky

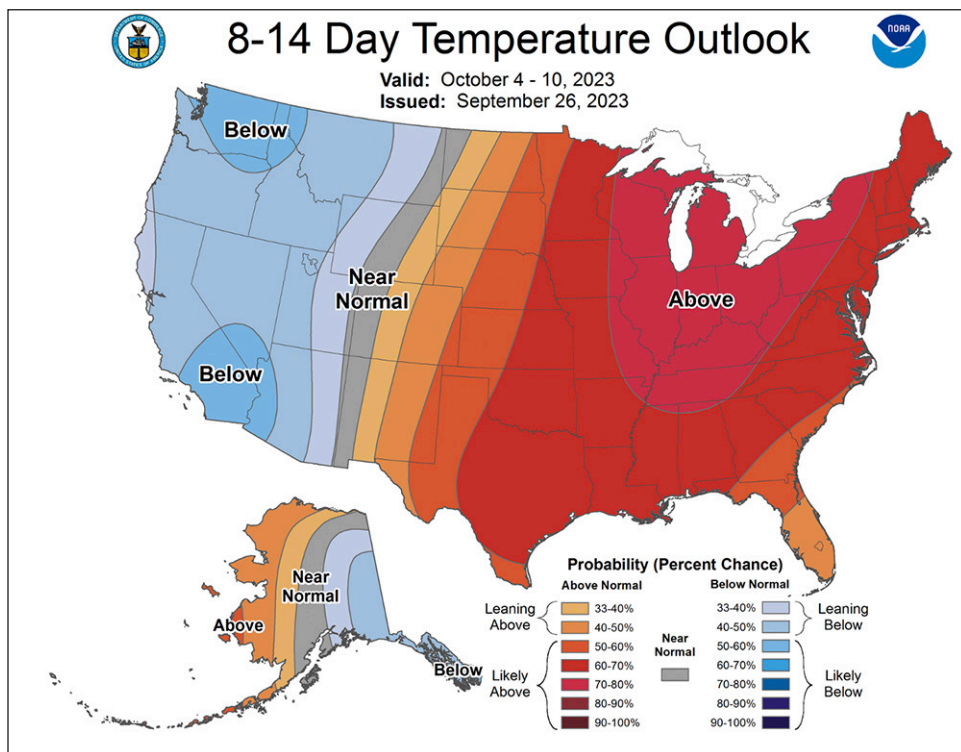
By Joshua Knight, Senior Extension Associate, Horticulture

Though many of us have experienced some cooler evenings so far, the NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is forecasting warmer than average temperatures for the first half of October across the Commonwealth and much of the eastern half of the continental U.S. in general. The models looking further into October are less certain, meaning that we should not assume a later than average date for first frosts.

The [plantmaps.com](https://plantmaps.com) website has [an interactive map for Kentucky's first frost dates](#)

based on daily climate data for the 30 years between 1991-2020, allowing users to find their precise location and click to get a predicted 10-day window for historic average first frost.

The precipitation outlook predicts a likelihood of drier than average conditions for most of Kentucky



during the first 10 days of October. After that, the predictions are less certain with current estimates showing equal chances for both more and less precipitation than average. The U.S. drought monitor shows abnormally dry conditions are affecting much of Ohio River Valley, so we may not expect relief until late October.

# UK Vegetable Extension offers new videos, publications

By Rachel Rudolph, UK Extension Vegetable Specialist

## New videos!

We have several newly posted YouTube videos available for viewing. These videos cover our research projects from this spring and summer and also offer some general educational content on various topics. If you want to stay up to date on our videos, feel free to subscribe to our YouTube channel.

- 2023 Video Field Day Overview of Research: <https://youtu.be/6fcxZZoQgJQ>
- Use of Essential Oils for Insect Management in Brassica Crops: <https://youtu.be/YMr3jNDi4GM>
- Lettuce Drop Research Project Update: <https://youtu.be/VsNvA7qrTf4>
- Benefits of Soil Solarization: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DH4lY-8IdNk>
- How to Solarize the Soil (an instructional video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LB2G3E0OPsU>
- Steps for Successful Transplanting: [https://youtu.be/5KH\\_e8ONw3Y](https://youtu.be/5KH_e8ONw3Y)
- Calculations for Small Acreage Pesticide Applications: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjS2dk3GwG0>
- Sanitation for Disease and Pest Management: [https://youtu.be/zhNc-5\\_sGBI](https://youtu.be/zhNc-5_sGBI)

We have also created a playlist so you can view all the videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQEQoZRMbybJzhDQOs0QF9j6eTIAMkq7C>

## New pubs!

There are two new publications that may be of

interest to vegetable growers.

- Bajek V, Munir M, Rudolph RE. 2023. Soil census of Kentucky high tunnels reveals statewide distribution of two *Meloidogyne* species. *Plant Health Progress* <https://doi.org/10.1094/PHP-05-23-0052-S>

This paper discusses the results of three years of soil sampling across Kentucky in which we collected soil from high tunnels and looked for root-knot nematode. Thank you to the growers and county agents who assisted with this project!

- Bajek V, Rudolph RE. 2023. Managing southern root-knot nematode in Kentucky high tunnels using grafted tomato. *HortScience* 58(6):704-713. <https://doi.org/10.21273/HORTSCI17141-23>

This paper discusses the results of on-farm experiments in which we evaluated several grafted tomato cultivars for yield and management of root-knot nematode populations. Thank you to the growers who participated in this project and allowed us to conduct research on their farms. The pdf for this paper is available to download here: <https://veg crops.ca.uky.edu/peer-review-publicationsjournal-articles>

## Grant opportunity for growers!

The call for proposals for Producer Grants through Southern SARE is now open!

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education funds grants for growers to conduct their own research. The deadline for submitting a proposal is November 10. To learn more about this program, follow this link: <https://southern.sare.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/producer-grants/>.



The banner features three logos on the left: the Kentucky State Horticultural Society (Since 1858), the Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association, and the Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK). The main text on the right reads: "2024 KENTUCKY FRUIT & VEGETABLE CONFERENCE". Below this, it states: "Jan. 3rd-4th, 2024", "Pre-conference events Jan. 2nd", "Sloan Convention Center", and "Bowling Green, Kentucky".



# Controlled-Environment Agriculture in the Commonwealth

*By Arundathi Sharma and Casey Byrd, UK Extension Associates - Controlled-Environment Agriculture*

As extension associates specialized in greenhouse and controlled-environment agriculture, we are frequently asked to share our opinions about the latest news coming from AppHarvest, which was by far the largest greenhouse horticulture enterprise in the state. After several months of uncertainty, AppHarvest recently declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy. In the wake of this event, we'd like to take this chance to weigh in on the company's impact and the outlook for the greenhouse industry in Kentucky.

AppHarvest was founded locally and professed a deep commitment to the revitalization of Eastern Kentucky. Its exit as a company was disappointing; however, the facilities that it built can continue to make valuable contributions to Kentucky's horticultural economy. Under new management and a diversity of operators, the greenhouses can be productive, profitable, and competitive as they have been in the Netherlands, where controlled-environment agriculture (CEA) has optimized crop yields to grow an agricultural export economy second in size only to that of the U.S. These facilities gained broad support from both the public and private sector because dedicated studies into Kentucky's appropriateness as a CEA industry ecosystem showed this state has great potential (see <https://www.uky.edu/ccd/content/cea-feasibility-study>).

While that study and the AppHarvest story have increased Kentucky's prominence internationally as an attractive site for CEA, the industry is not new here. This state has a longstanding history of protected (covered) agriculture, including controlled-environment cultivation of ornamental, vegetable, and tobacco crops. **It is essential that institutional understanding and support for CEA include the full range of farm sizes, from large-**

**scale facilities to small and medium-size farms (SMEs), which comprise the bulk of Kentucky's horticulture producers and have kept the local supply of fresh produce stable, even through supply chain crises.**

As such, UK Extension, with support from the Kentucky Horticulture Council and the Appalachian Regional Commission, has accordingly ramped up programming targeted at SMEs that use or are transitioning into controlled-environment techniques. The first step has been to find out more about the state of CEA in Kentucky; who has already adopted these production systems, which crops do they grow, where do they sell their products, and what challenges are they facing?

An ongoing census of greenhouse operations in the state, the first of its kind, promises both to answer these questions and to serve as a valuable resource for a wide variety of users. By having access to an up-to-date census of operational protected-ag growers in the state, those growers will have the opportunity to find and support each other, organize themselves, and advocate for their collective interests. They can further choose to formally reactivate the erstwhile Greenhouse Growers Association that ceased operations in Kentucky more than a decade ago. Meanwhile, support organizations like University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service county offices can use the grower database to better understand their clientele and ensure programming is appropriate and relevant. Even buyers may find this a useful resource to search for local growers that can supply them with fresh produce in the off-season.

Growers and county agents interested in adding data to the census or connecting with resources related to controlled-environment growing are encouraged to reach out to us at [arundathi.sharma@uky.edu](mailto:arundathi.sharma@uky.edu) and [casey.byrd@uky.edu](mailto:casey.byrd@uky.edu).

*Organic Association of Kentucky*

# ANNUAL FARMING CONFERENCE



*Advancing Organics In Kentucky:  
Adopting Practices, Increasing Resilience and Strengthening Systems*  
**JANUARY 25-27, 2024 | Frankfort, KY**

## New pruning videos available from UK Fruit Extension

*By Delia Scott, UK Extension Associate for Beginning Farmers*

Apple harvest is in full swing this month, but if you're thinking ahead to next year's crop, check out these two new pruning videos that have been posted to the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's [YouTube channel!](#) Extension Associate Delia Scott and Emeritus Extension

Professor Dr. John Strang discuss [Pruning Tall Spindle Apple Trees](#) and [Pruning Central Leader Apple Trees](#). The tall spindle is a high-density supported training system with trees planted on dwarf rootstocks. Trees can produce a crop in as little as a year after planting. Central leader apple trees are pruned to a classic pyramid or oval shape, with a dominant shoot (or leader) in the center of the tree.

## Controlled Environment Insurance Program informational sessions

*From the USDA Risk Management Agency website*

USDA is in the process of implementing a new Federal Crop Insurance program designed to provide agricultural producers who use controlled environments in their operations an opportunity to insure against losses due to destruction orders based on detection of plant disease vectors. USDA is hosting public sessions to introduce the program to interested parties and answer any questions you may have. For more information, visit [https://www.rma.usda.gov/Topics/Controlled-Environment-Insurance-Program-Informational-Sessions?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.rma.usda.gov/Topics/Controlled-Environment-Insurance-Program-Informational-Sessions?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

ACRES<sup>USA</sup> invites you to a FREE live webinar on:

### Organic Certified Producer Panel

October 5, 11 am CT / 12 pm ET

**REGISTER FREE NOW!**

United States Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
National Organic Program  
Transition to Organic Partnership Program



# Maple syrup workshop set for October 16<sup>th</sup> in Boone County

By Jordan Strickler, UK Agricultural Communications

In 1930, a sugar shortage hit Kentucky, compelling residents to tap into their resourcefulness and try their hand making maple syrup. Over the years, this craft gradually faded into obscurity.

But in recent years, Kentucky's maple syrup production has made a remarkable resurgence. On Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> at the Boone County Environmental and Nature Center, the [University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment](#) will join forces with the [Kentucky Maple Syrup Association](#), the [Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development](#), [The Ohio State University](#) and the [Ohio Maple Producers Association](#) to host a workshop to expand the public's maple syrup knowledge.

The primary objective is to cultivate and expand knowledge of the maple syrup industry and equip attendees with the necessary skills to embark on their own syrup-making ventures.

"This hands-on maple syrup production workshop will walk participants through the entire process — from selecting and tapping trees to value-added options and retail considerations," said Billy Thomas, extension forester with the [UK Department of Forestry and Natural Resources](#). During the workshop, participants may immerse

themselves in the world of the state's maple syrup industry and gain insights into national trends related to maple syrup demand.

The day promises to be a hands-on experience guiding attendees through the intricate maple syrup production process. Participants will learn about tapping techniques and various methods of sap collection as well as engage in discussions on maple syrup production.

Participants will learn about value-added options and retail variables during the workshop's concluding dinner.

"The maple syrup industry in Kentucky is experiencing remarkable growth," Thomas said. "We believe this program will play a pivotal role in supporting not only individual maple syrup producers but also the industry as a whole."

To register for this enriching workshop, please visit <https://ky-maplesyrup.ca.uky.edu/workshops>. The cost is \$10, including dinner.

Partial funding for this project was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant AM200100XXXXG007. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

## Thanks for reading!

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