

Vol. 97 No. 10-11 November 8, 1997

Really BIG Vegetables

Dr. Richard G. Snyder, Vegetable Specialist

Are you interested in growing the biggest or largest vegetables, either for fun or for profit? Yes, I said profit. Then you might want to know about the Giant Growers Association, a group in North Carolina that has an annual weigh off.

This year, the winners, and their winnings, were as shown in the box.

There are first through tenth place winners for each category.

Entries were received from 11 states, and over 7,000 people attended this year's weigh off on September 13. Prize money totaling \$35,000 was awarded.

If this sounds worthwhile to you, you can contact the Giant Growers Association at P.O. Box 37457, Raleigh, NC 27627-7457, or call Harry Hurley at (919) 557-5946.

Fall Garden Day Follow-up

Dr. Rick Snyder, Vegetable Specialist

We had a very successful Fall Garden Day October 17 at the Truck Crops Experiment Station. With the weather absolutely perfect, attendance was excellent. During the 6 hour day, we had 2,669 adults and 800 school children attend on Friday, for a total of nearly 3,500 people.

In addition, in the week after Fall Garden Day, we had educational programming for another 1,083 school children with the help of Deborah Knight and Shelby Bearden from the Copiah County Extension Service, and many 4-H/Youth Agents in the area surrounding Copiah County.

I would like to thank all the

| <u>Crop</u> | <u>Size</u> | <u>Award</u> |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------|
| pumpkin | 649.5 pounds | \$5,000 |
| watermelon | 203 pounds | 5,000 |
| tomato | 4.4 pounds | 2,000 |
| cantaloupe | 54.6 pounds | 2,000 |
| bushel gourd | 161.5 pounds | 500 |
| dipper gourd | 65.75 inches | 500 |
| sunflower head | 19 3/8 inch diameter | 400 |
| bean | 51 3/8 inches (new winner for Guinness Book) | |

volunteers for supporting the Fall Garden Day again this year. Without your help, our small staff would not be able to handle an event of this magnitude.

New this year was the Bloodmobile, from Mississippi Blood Services. In the 4 hours that they were on the grounds, 26 people donated blood. They awarded door prizes to Leana England of Crystal Springs (T-shirt), Clarence Finley of Brookhaven (T-shirt), and Clancey Lambert of Bogue Chitto, who won the grand prize of 4 football tickets to the U.S.M. vs. Houston game.

This year we encouraged visitors to view the garden even after the Fall Garden Day, with staff on hand from 9 am to 4 PM from October 18 to 26. Many area people stopped by on the weekends to get a closer look at the garden without having to encounter crowds.

We are already evaluating this year's program and are making plans for the 1998 Fall Garden Day next October. About 800 people filled out survey cards, and we will be using these in planning for next year.

Sweetpotato Weevil Control

Dr. J. Pat Harris, Extension Entomologist

Check your crop for **sweetpotato weevils**. Adults lay their eggs in stems and the grubs work down to the roots. Once in roots, the life cycle continues and roots may become riddled. The adult is a shiny, slender, snout beetle about 1/4 inch long. The head, wing covers, and abdomen are blue-black. The segment behind the head (prothorax) and the legs are bright red.

We have a 24C (Special Local Need Label) for Imidan 70 WP and Imidan 70 WSB labels for use in Mississippi this year. Apply 1 1/3 lbs./acre as needed, with up to five applications. Water pH should be 5.5 to 6.0 for best results. Thiodan will give suppression but not control of this pest. Apply as a foliar spray in 2.5 gallons of water per acre. Several applications may be necessary.

After sweetpotatoes are harvested, use Imidan 5 dust at 2-4 ounces per bushel when storing. Cover all surfaces using only one application. Be sure to wash sweetpotatoes before using. Legally, sweetpotatoes infested with weevils should not be moved from the farm until first cleared with the Division of Plant Industry. There is a quarantine on this pest.

Spider Mite Control

Dr. J. Pat Harris, Extension Entomologist

Spider mites are tiny, almost microscopic pests which feed on the undersides of leaves. They remove the sap, causing the leaves to become discolored. Where populations are heavy, they can cause leaves to drop off. They vary in color from light green to red. Two-spotted mites are most difficult to control.

Mites usually reach damaging populations in hot, dry weather. Close examination of the undersides of leaves with a hand lens reveals a fine webbing of silk. Mites may be found in this webbing or on the leaf surface. In severe cases, mites may be found on the upper surfaces of the leaves.

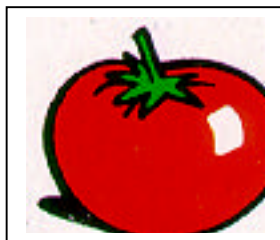
Control of spider mites usually requires multiple applications of a miticide at weekly intervals. Depending on the crops to be sprayed, applications of dicofol (Kelthane), malathion, diazinon, or dimethoate (Cygon) will control mites. If the label permits, use Kelthane for two-spotted mite control. Coverage of both upper and lower leaf surfaces is necessary for good control.

Refer to product labels for crop registrations and usage restrictions.

Rindworm Control

Dr. J. Pat Harris, Extension Entomologist

Rindworm is a term describing any worm attacking the rind of a melon. It does not refer to a specific species. The most common worms fitting this description are cutworms, corn earworms, loopers, pickle or melon worms, beet worms, and fall armyworms.



When the rind is attacked, identify the insect correctly since no one insecticide will control all of the aforementioned species.

Stay On-Guard for Greenhouse Tomato Diseases

Dr. Frank Killebrew, Extension Plant Pathologist

We're off to another greenhouse tomato season, and while disease pressure is still relatively light, experienced growers are aware that pest management activities should begin the day the transplants are placed in the greenhouse. It's time to concentrate on the following practices as a way to reduce chances for major disease outbreaks later in the season.

* Practice daily crop scouting. Check plants for early symptoms of gray mold, target spot, early blight, and other fungal diseases. Gray mold generally doesn't appear this early in the season, but nutritionally or heat stressed plants, or plants suffering from pesticide burn or other types of injury, are vulnerable to attack. The symptoms of gray mold, as well as for other diseases, are described in Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service publication 1861: Greenhouse Tomatoes - Pest Management in Mississippi. This publication was revised earlier this year, and if you don't have the latest edition, check with your County Extension Agent or contact me for a free copy.

* Greenhouse growers in the southern and central parts of the state should remember that Extension IPM Technician Andy Milling is available for "house calls" if assistance is needed in identification of disease or insect problems. He can be reached at 601-635-3542.

* Locate a supply of Exotherm Termil and Botran 75W, which will likely be needed as part of a management program for gray mold and other diseases. It's a good idea to make sure these products will be available, since even a short delay in fungicide application can make disease management more difficult. Also, don't rely on fungicides as the only means of fungus disease control. These products are just one part of a management program for gray mold and the other diseases. Use fungicides in conjunction with greenhouse ventilation and air circulation to maintain relative humidity below 90%.

* For growers who have delayed transplanting, special care should be taken to avoid Pythium root rot problems if a carryover growth medium is to be used. Residual root systems should be removed from bags or lay flats, prior to final transplanting. Leftover root masses are often colonization sites for Pythium spp. and contribute to higher inoculum levels of these fungi throughout the growth medium. While high levels of Pythium may not be present in growth medium after one crop, longer periods of use will lead to problems. Additionally, the old root masses tend to act as "sponges" and trap water in the vicinity of transplant roots. This leads to wet conditions which are necessary for root infection by

Pythium. Before planting in such bags or containers, work up the growth medium to reduce packing. This practice will promote better aeration and water drainage, thus reducing the chances for Pythium root infection.

- Growers who plan to reuse growth media, may want to consider use of Mycostop Biofungicide treatments through the season as a preventive for Pythium root rot, as well as Fusarium crown and root rot. Mycostop, based on trials conducted in other states on greenhouse vegetable crops, shows promise as a disease control agent. Mycostop is not a one-shot treatment and should be used as part of an integrated disease management program for soil-borne diseases of greenhouse tomatoes. Growers who wish to obtain information on Mycostop and product availability should contact AgBio Development Inc., 9915 Raleigh Street, Westminster, CO 80030.

Mississippi Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference

Dr. Rick Snyder, Vegetable Specialist

The annual meeting of the Mississippi Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association (MFVGA) will be held Tuesday, December 2 at the Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum, 1150 Lakeland Drive, Jackson, MS.

The tentative schedule is included at the end of this newsletter.

The topics chosen this year were the result of a survey that went out to all growers and County Agents in Mississippi.

For information, contact Dr. Freddie Rasberry at (601) 325-1681.

Calendar of Coming Events _

Dr. Richard G. Snyder, Vegetable Specialist

December 2 - Mississippi Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association Annual Conference, at Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum, 1150 Lakeland Drive, Jackson, MS. For information, contact Dr. Freddie Rasberry at (601) 325-1681.

December 15-17 - North Carolina Fruit and Vegetable Expo. - Greensboro, NC. For more information, contact Dr. George Wilson at (919) 515-1208.

December 16-18 - New England Vegetable & Berry Conference; Host Inn, Sturbridge, MA. For information, contact Dr. Richard Ashley at (203) 486-3435.

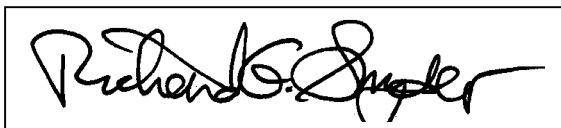
January 10 - Suwanee Valley Field and Greenhouse Grower's Shortcourse & Trade Show, Live Oak, FL. For information, call Bob Hochmuth at (904) 362-1725.

February 10-12 - New York State Vegetable Conference, at Four Points ITT/Sheraton Hotel, Liverpool, NY. For information, call (607) 539-7648.

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file: E:\WPFILES\VEGPRESS\NEWS1097.wpd

Vegetable Press url: <http://www.ces.msstate.edu/~ricks/vegpress/>
Greenhouse Tomato FAQ: <http://www.ces.msstate.edu/~ricks/wwwpapers/faq.html>
HomePage: <http://www.ces.msstate.edu/~ricks/>

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Richard G. Snyder".

MFVGA

Tentative Conference Program

December 2, 1997

Introductions

- 9:00 Lester Spell (10 min)
 9:10 David Wade, President, Farm Bureau (10 min)

Morning Session

- 9:20 Broccoli Production, Boyett Graves (20 min)
 9:40 Pepper Production, Boyett Graves (20 min)
 10:00 Asian Vegetable Production, David Nagel (30 min)
 10:30 Buying Vegetables, Jitney Jungle rep (30 min)
 11:00 Nutsedge Management, Delta Branch speaker (30 min)
 11:30 Beekeeping, Clarence Collison (30 min)

12:00 LUNCH

Afternoon Session

- 1:00 Growers Talks - Ben Burkett (crop production and vegetable shed) (30 min)
 1:30 Marketing Session (60 min)

2:30 BREAK

- 2:45 Transition between being a small Grower and a larger grower (30 min)
 3:15 Crop Updates (3-4 minutes each)
- Watermelon, Clyde Magee
 - Sweetpotatoes, Benny Graves
 - Blueberries, John Braswell
 - Muscadines, Guy Feltenstein
 - Strawberries, David Courtney
 - Pecans, Randolph Smith
 - Peaches, Freddie Rasberry
 - Greens & Cole Crops, Alan Eubanks
 - Tomatoes, Clyde Magee
 - Greenhouse Tomatoes, Rick Snyder
 - Southern Peas, Louis Guedon
 - Ornamental Persimmons, Jack Reese