

# 2021 NEVBGA CONFERENCE DESCRIPTIONS

- **Climate Adaptation Strategies on the Farm**  
As the climate changes, how we farm will need to change too. Come join us to hear how growers have worked with agricultural service provider to assess their climate-risk exposure and try new adaptation practices including heat-tolerant vegetable varieties, using living mulches, mitigating high temperatures with kaolin clay, and using organic no-till practices.
- **Berry I**  
This session focuses on pest and disease management in berry crops – with the first two talks focusing on a specific approach (netting) and general approaches to managing spotted wing drosophila, a pest of all berry crops. The last session will focus on managing fungal diseases of blueberry that can be significant in the Northeast, *Phomopsis* and *Fusicoccum*.
- **Berry II**  
This session focuses on production systems for fruit crops ranging from strawberry to raspberry, blackberry and blueberry. The first talk will explore alternative growing systems for strawberry and raspberry that are used in Canada, including substrate production. Two growers who successfully grow blackberries in New England will share their perspectives about this crop. Strawberry flavor and how growing practices affect berry flavor are the subject of the third talk, and the last presentation will present strategies for pruning blueberries and raspberries to maximize success.
- **Tillage Reduction Innovations**  
Reducing tillage on diversified vegetable farms is an increasingly popular strategy to help improve soil health, but practice adoption can be incredibly challenging. This session will introduce growers to both practical on-farm management and research based information for reducing or eliminating tillage on vegetable operations of all scales. Several farmers in this session will highlight the process, successes, innovations, and disappointments with their reduced tillage journey, including discussions of using tarps, how to organically no-till plant into cover crops. Field-based researchers will also share up to date guidance and the science behind the effectiveness of tarps within these systems. Specific crops discussed include pumpkins, strawberry and mixed vegetables.
- **Soil Health**  
Soil health is a critical topic for all growers. Our invited speakers are passionate about soil health and willing to share their expertise with us. Topics will range from permanent beds and herbicide free tillage reduction to soil steaming to on-farm soil health benchmarking. Join us to learn what's happening in New England to improve soil health."
- **Tree Fruit I**  
The first two talks in the session will be presented by Elizabeth Garofalo and Dr. Jaime Pineo who will discuss fungal and insect problems, respectively, that caused tree fruit growers the most problems in 2021. The last two talks in the session will focus on chemical thinning strategies. Dr. Philip Schwallier will share his many years of experience on thinning apples as Regional Fruit Specialist at Michigan State University. Accede® is being introduced as a late season chemical thinner. Jon Clements will review and summarize 2021 results of the Experimental Use Permit he oversaw in Massachusetts in anticipation of full registration of this product in 2022.
- **Tree Fruit II**  
The first speaker, Dr. Jaime Pinero will present second year results of a long-term project aimed at evaluating the attractiveness of selected perimeter row trees grafted with multiple cultivars known to be attractive to pests. The remaining three talks in the session will focus on control of diseases of apples. Dr. George Sundin, Professor at Michigan State University, will cover biology of fire blight and outline cutting-edge techniques to manage fire blight and control its spread in high density apple orchards.

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Dr. Daniel Cooley will present information on how to use decision support systems as key components in managing diseases. Dr. George Sundin will close the session by discussing various classes of fungicides that are important for apple scab management with an emphasis on activity and resistance management.

- **Vegetable Pest and Disease Update**

Please attend this session to learn more about major insects and diseases we saw in 2021. Insect pests discussed include: onion thrips, allium leafminer, leek moth, and wireworms; and diseases discussed include cucurbit downy and powdery mildews and bacterial blight in arugula. Time has been set aside for grower questions.

- **Inspirations from Away**

The COVID-19 pandemic has given us the opportunity to bring speakers in from farther afield and also to attend meetings across the world. This session brings colleagues near and far together to highlight interesting vegetable growing practices and ideas from outside the Northeast region. Topics include: tips from Canada on growing asparagus, sweet potatoes, garlic, and tunnel crops; scaling up through specialization in Europe; and marketing strategies from the Pacific Northwest. We hope you will join us to get some new perspective and inspiration.

- **Cost Effective Automation for Small-Scale Vegetable Growers**

Investments in cost-effective automation can pay off quickly in a world of increasing labor shortages, unpredictable weather events, and other challenges faced by vegetable farms in the Northeast. In this program, we first focus on automation systems for high tunnel production for climate control and irrigation. In the second half of the program, we interview four growers on equipment that has proven to be sound investments for their farms. Pricing, labor reduction, operation of the equipment, and other aspects of these machinery investments are discussed using an on-farm video demonstration and live Q&A format.