



Fruit Production

Delivering Timely Fruit Production Programs

For more than 100 years, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension has been helping people address critical issues, needs and opportunities by delivering the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses. Seeking to improve lives and the state overall, MSU Extension focuses on four key areas of importance: leveraging natural and human assets, enhancing agriculture and agribusiness, improving health and nutrition for Michigan residents, and preparing Michigan's children and youth for the future. In 2015, more than 13,500 participants used science-based deliverables including educational meetings, reports and bulletins produced by MSU Extension fruit educators.



Michigan is a major producer of apples, blueberries, cherries, grapes and many other fruit crops. To maintain competitiveness in a global marketplace, Michigan fruit growers need to be on the cutting edge of economically sustainable production, pest management and post-harvest practices. MSU Extension fruit researchers and educators deliver this information to fruit producers through year-round programs.

Winter Programs

MSU Extension fruit educators organize and develop statewide and regionally-specific, off-season meetings from fall to early spring. They provide post-season analyses and educate stakeholders on current trends in fruit production and pest management.

- **The Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo** (GL Expo), held annually in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in early December, attracted over 4,200 attendees from 42 states and five Canadian provinces. More than half of all GL Expo attendees participated in one or more of the 17 fruit education sessions organized by MSU Extension fruit educators in 2015.
- **The biannual Tree Fruit IPM School**, an intensive 2.5-day program, had 88 participants in February 2015.
- **The Northwest Orchard and Vineyard Show**, held in Acme, Michigan, attracted 324 participants in January 2015.
- **Southwest Horticultural Days** fruit sessions held in Benton Harbor, Michigan, hosted 164 attendees in February 2015.
- **IPM Kickoff Meetings**, held in each of the major fruit growing areas, attracted 50-200 growers in March and April 2015.



The SWD Summit at the Northwest Michigan Horticulture Research Center in November hosted 124 industry stakeholders.

In-Season Horticulture and IPM

Fruit educators develop in-season, one-time workshops as well as weekly, bi-weekly or monthly face-to-face meetings that provide timely horticultural and integrated pest management (IPM) information to fruit

producers and consultants. In 2015, these meetings included:

- **Tree Fruit Plant Growth Regulators (PGR) Meetings** in west Michigan that delivered PGR information to apple producers and attracted 189 participants.
- **Fruit IPM Meetings** that reached over 2,000 fruit producers and consultants who look to MSU Extension for production recommendations during the growing season. Seventy-six meetings were held across the state in 2015:
 - › 32 Northwest Michigan Tree Fruit IPM Updates (537 participants)
 - › 23 Fruit Ridge Tree Fruit Meetings (1,175 participants)
 - › 11 Southwest Michigan Fruit IPM Meetings (150 participants)
 - › 7 Blueberry IPM Meetings (150 participants)
 - › 5 Northwest First Friday Grape Grower meetings

Spotted Winged Drosophila

The invasive insect, spotted wing Drosophila (SWD), is a top priority for Michigan fruit producers. MSU Extension delivered research and educational programs to help producers minimize production risks associated with SWD.

- A grant-funded, statewide monitoring network began in 2010 and has been ongoing since its inception. In 2015, a total of 139 traps were placed in fruit crops throughout the state to assist growers with first detection of this pest.
- Annual SWD Summits that address the cherry industry priorities for SWD research and extension have been held for the past two years. In 2015, 124 attendees participated in this educational program and needs assessment.
- Two SWD training workshops presented in Spanish and English hosted 44 blueberry growers. Additionally, timely SWD information was delivered at the IPM Update meetings listed above.

Winery Establishment

While the Michigan grape and winery industry continues to grow, becoming established in the winery business is complex and costly. The 2015 Winery Establishment Conference held in cooperation with the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council in February 2015 had 46 participants from 15 counties. Many participants were entrepreneurs who are interested in value-added agriculture and food processing.



Farm Labor

Finding and retaining seasonal labor is a challenge faced by fruit producers. In 2015, MSU Extension offered three educational opportunities to address strategies for labor shortages.

- West Michigan Ag Labor Meeting (86 participants)
- Northwest Michigan Ag Labor Meeting (27 participants)
- Southwest Michigan Ag Labor Meeting (57 participants)



Male SWD