

North Mississippi Fruit and Vegetable Newsletter

July/August 2017



Dr. Jeff Wilson, Regional Horticulture Specialist

I hope that all of you are having a successful growing season so far. I know the weather has been favorable for diseases that affect your crops. Casey and I have received numerous calls about this issue already. I have also seen that pollination is an issue this year with all fruiting crops, due to the unusual temperatures this spring. Hopefully the weather will be cooperative through the rest of this season and you can have a profitable year.

We will be having some production field days during the year, so please take note of the Upcoming Events section each month to see which programs can benefit your operation and make it more productive. If you have any ideas for these programs or for possible research projects, we would like to hear your thoughts. Please contact myself or Casey at any time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 13 -16 - Nut and Fruit Growers Meeting

The Northern Nut Growers Association & the North American Fruit Explorers will hold a conference at the University of Georgia, Tifton from August 13-16. Will have presentations on the latest cultivation methods of traditional fruits/nuts of the Southeast. Tour sites include visits to the experimental plantings and the Farmstead of the Future at the University of Georgia in Tifton, Fort Valley State University, the USDA ARS Station in Byron, and a 40 acre pecan orchard. We will introduce non-traditional crops, including pawpaw, persimmon, jujube, Chinese chestnut, chinquapin, olives, citrus, hazelnut, and mulberries. There will also be information on marketing techniques that will optimize the sales of fruits and nuts. For details and registration information, go to: www.nutgrowing.org/meetinfo.htm

August 26 – Muscadine Field Day

Held in McNeill, MS at the MSU McNeill Research Station (7 Ben Gill Rd, Carriere, MS). Registration starts at 8:30am and program is from 9-11am.

September 15 - Winemaking Workshop

In Starkville, MS. Please see attached document for registration information.

Pesticide Applicator Trainings

Anyone using pesticides in their farm operation should have proper trainings and certifications. These are one of the most basic trainings that all workers should attend. They are held in individual counties and you should contact your local Extension Ag Agent for further info.

GAP/GHP Cost-Share Program

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is currently offering a cost-share program to provide financial assistance to Mississippi fruit and vegetable farmers receiving Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) Certification. Eligible farmers will receive reimbursement for 75% of the certification costs up to a maximum of \$500.

Plant Pathology Odds and Ends

By Dr. Rebecca A. Melanson, MSU Extension Plant Pathologist

Cucurbit Downy Mildew. Downy mildew was confirmed in acorn squash, butternut squash, cantaloupe, cucumber, and watermelon in the Cucurbit Downy Mildew Sentinel Plot at the Truck Crops Branch Experiment Station in Copiah County the last week of June (cucumber) and the first week of July (all other listed crops). This is almost two months earlier than the first confirmed report of downy mildew in any cucurbit crop in 2016. Additional reports of downy mildew in other counties in Mississippi will be posted to the Cucurbit Downy Mildew Forecasting website (<http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/>) as they are confirmed. Please see the MSU Extension publication on [Cucurbit Downy Mildew](#) for more information about this disease, including photos of disease symptoms and a description of disease management options and tools.

Gummy Stem Blight. Gummy stem blight on watermelon has been a concern for a number of growers this year. This disease was confirmed in Southeast Mississippi in various locations in late May and mid-June. Symptoms of this disease include circular, tan to brown lesions on leaves (Figure 1), cankers on stems (Figure 2), and lesions on fruits. A brown exudate (Figure 2) as well as fungal fruiting bodies (Figure 3) that can be seen with a hand lens may be present on the surface of stem cankers and fruit lesions. Examination, with a microscope, of these fruiting bodies and the spores produced in these fruiting bodies is important in the diagnostic process. A list of fungicides labeled for use against gummy stem blight in cucurbits grown for commercial production is available in the [Southeastern U.S. Vegetable Crop Handbook](#). An example spray program for the management of various foliar diseases in watermelon, including gummy stem blight, is also included in the Southeastern U.S. Vegetable Crop Handbook.



Figure 1. Gummy stem blight lesions on a watermelon leaf. Photo: D. Langston, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org.



Figure 2. Gummy stem blight canker on a watermelon stem. Dark exudate is visible on the canker. Photo: R. A. Melanson, MSU Extension, Bugwood.org.



Figure 3. Round, black fruiting bodies (pycnidia) of the gummy stem blight fungus in a lesion on a watermelon stem. Photo: R. A. Melanson, MSU Extension, Bugwood.org.

T. Casey Barickman, Ph.D., Assistant Research and Extension Professor

I am working on getting our research results and other information to all grower and extension agents easily through our new vegetable research program website, Facebook page, and Twitter site. We are also working on a Snapchat site so you can see all of our story and progress throughout the season. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about your operation or if you have suggestions for our research and extension program! Please visit our website and social media outlets for all our progress! Happy Growing!

Website: <http://vegetablelab.mafes.msstate.edu/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nmrechorticulture/>

New and Updated Publications. Several new and updated Extension publications regarding diseases and disease management in fruits, pecan, and vegetables are now available online and are listed below. The collection of these publications include options for non-chemical methods of disease management as well as chemical methods for disease management in the selected crops.

Fruits:

- 2017 Southeast Regional Blueberry Integrated Management Guide (Available at www.smallfruits.org)
- 2017 Southeast Regional Organic Blueberry Pest Management Guide (Available at www.smallfruits.org)
- 2017 Southeast Regional Strawberry Integrated Management Guide (Available at www.smallfruits.org)
- 2017 Southeast Regional Muscadine Grape Integrated Management Guide (Available at www.smallfruits.org)
- 2017 Southeastern Peach, Nectarine and Plum Pest Management and Culture Guide (Available at extension.uga.edu)

Pecan:

- Pecan Bacterial Leaf Scorch (Available at extension.msstate.edu)

Vegetables:

- Organic Vegetable IPM Guide (Available at extension.msstate.edu)
- Greenhouse Basil Downy Mildew (Available at extension.msstate.edu)
- Greenhouse Tomatoes: Pest Management in Mississippi (Available at extension.msstate.edu)
- 2017 Southeastern US Vegetable Crop Handbook (Available at www.thepacker.com/)

Buying Commercial Scales on the Internet

The internet brings many options to our buying decisions. While there is much to be said for supporting local businesses with known reputations and service after sale, more and more consumers are turning to the internet for convenience and often lower prices. This can be a risky proposition when buying a scale that will affect your profits and be subject to regulatory requirements. This guide is designed to help you identify red flags and avoid some of the pitfalls if considering an internet purchase of a commercial scale. These things are important in any purchase of a scale, but may require additional effort on your part if you use an internet vendor.

Be aware of regulations.

Most states require NTEP Certification for new scales that will be used in buying or selling. The NTEP Certificate is issued by the National Type Evaluation Program and it provides confidence that the model meets regulatory standards for design and performance and most likely can be approved for use in a commercial application. When shopping online, you will see the NTEP name, logo and often the phrase “Legal for Trade”, but unfortunately things aren’t always as they seem.

The NTEP name and logo are trademarked, but less reputable vendors have been identified using it without license and using it in misleading or deceptive ways. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to protect yourself in your purchase decision.

Do you know who you are buying from?

Look on the website for business name, a physical address, phone number and email address. A business that values its reputation and wants return business will eagerly provide its identity and contact information. Consider the reasons why a business might not be so transparent as you read through our tips.

Does the ad claim that the scale is NTEP certified, either through a statement or by placement of the NTEP Logo in the advertisement?

If you don’t see it, don’t buy it. Inquire first with the vendor about NTEP Certification. Even if the ad says it is NTEP certified, you need to verify it.

Tips Before you Buy

Be aware of regulations.

Know who you are buying from.

Look for “NTEP” or the NTEP logo in the advertisement.

Identify the manufacturer, model and NTEP Certificate Number.

Look up the NTEP Certificate of Conformance.

What does the phrase “Legal for Trade” mean?

When comparing prices, consider the big picture.

Contact your regulatory authority before you buy.

Does the ad identify the manufacturer, model and NTEP Certificate Number?

Most ads will include the manufacturer's name, the model designation, and sometimes the NTEP Certificate number. It is important to understand what you are seeing.

Many scales come as a single instrument similar to what you see on the deli counter of your local grocery store. Other scales are advertised and sold as individual components which make up a complete scale. In this case, each of the components must have their own certificate number. This is where deception can occur. The NTEP logo placed in an ad would imply that the system is certified when, in reality, one or more components might not be.

If the vendor is willing to disclose information on the separate components of the system, it's a very good sign and gives you a tool for additional verification.

Look up the NTEP Certificate of Conformance.

A searchable database is available on the website of the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM): the standards organization that administers NTEP. See

http://www.ncwm.net/ntep/cert_search. There, you can find and download the actual certificates.

Many certificates even have pictures for comparison to what you see in the advertisement.

The certificate will describe whether it applies to a component such as an indicator, a platform, the load cells, or if it applies to a complete scale. If you want some help, NCWM is just a phone call away or you can contact your state regulatory authority. A directory is available at on the NCWM website at <http://www.ncwm.net/resource/state-directors>.

What does the phrase "Legal for Trade" mean?

In some ads you may see the phrase "Legal for Trade". This phrase is often misused even by many reputable dealers. Let's be clear on this one. No scale is legal for trade until the regulatory authority says it's legal for trade. NTEP Certification provides some assurance that it is manufactured to meet national standards, but there are other factors that the inspector must consider before approving the device for use in your business such as suitability, proper installation, and accuracy. Is the internet vendor helpful to you in understanding these other factors before selling you a "legal for trade" scale?

When comparing prices, consider the big picture.

Let's be honest; NTEP Certification is merely the bare-bones minimum standard. Anything less is not considered legal for commerce in most states. Maybe bare-bones is all you need, but don't assume all things NTEP are created equal. Some are higher quality than others and many have value added features that might help your business.

Does the internet vendor explain these differences for you? Also consider whether the vendor has an authorized local dealer who knows the legal requirements, can properly install and calibrate the scale and will be there for you after the sale.

If in doubt, contact your regulatory authority before you buy at www.ncwm.net/resource/state-directors They won't tell you what to buy, but they can tell you what not to buy. Many of them also maintain lists of licensed sales and service vendors who have demonstrated understanding of the requirements necessary for a scale to be "legal for trade". It's an important purchase. Buy wisely. And also consider supporting that local business.

National Conference on Weights and Measures / National Type Evaluation Program

1135 M Street, Suite 110 Lincoln, Nebraska 68508 P. 402.434.4880 F. 402.434.4878 E. info@ncwm.net W. www.ncwm.net

MSU-ES Contact info: Below are the contact names and numbers that are directly related to you and your production issues. Please start with your local county Extension agent to help find answers to your questions. They are capable of handling your request and have access to all of our resources.

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