What’s new?

**Bumper Cantaloupe Crop This Year**

This week in ‘The Packer’ the talk among cantaloupe growers and shippers is optimistic. The Midwest Marketing Co. Inc., Vincennes, Ind., was wrapping up their Georgia cantaloupe operation at the end of last week and heading on to Indiana, said Kelly Tyner, salesman. South Carolina and North Carolina also provide melons to the company. The crop looks good this year. The ‘Athena’ variety is still popular in the Southeast, with ‘Eclipses’ and ‘Aphrodites’ more popular in the Midwest. The crop is tasty, too, Tyner said, some late, heavy rains in the growing season held Brix levels in the 10-11% range at the opening of the season, but last week they were expected to be up to 12-15%.

As for size, the melons are BIG this summer. I have seen plenty of giant cantaloupes across TN and we are not alone. Twenty-four inch bins of 80s and 90s will be abundant, Tyner said, with volumes lower on 110s and 120s. Prices should be on the rise, along with the heat, as July progresses. In the last 2 weeks of June prices dipped below $1 per melon, but those should climb to the $1.25 range fairly quickly, Tyner predicted. On July 3, the USDA reported prices of $4.50-5 for ½ cartons of cantaloupes 9-15s from California and Arizona, up from $3.50-4.50 last year at the same time. To ensure that your melons make it to the market, keep on reading below.

This article was adapted from “Big, sweet cantaloupes expected this summer” by Andy Nelson from ‘The Packer’.

**Downy Mildew Moving in on All Sides**

Downy mildew has now been reported in states in every direction from Tennessee–SC, NC, NY, OH, MI and now TX. Still, no reports in TN. Kenny Sebold, University of Kentucky, says, “Downy mildew is an aggressive, fast-moving disease & can be hard to stop when it gets started. Under ideal conditions, infection levels can go from 10% of leaf area infected to 90-100% in less than a week.” The symptoms of downy mildew are a little different for each cucurbit species, making it sometimes difficult to identify. It can also be confused with powdery mildew, which doesn’t help matters when you are trying to keep the disease under control. Both of these diseases can cause yellow spots on the upper surface of a leaf. In the case of downy mildew, leaf spots tend to be small, blocky, and are limited by leaf veins, he says, while spots associated with powdery mildew are round and somewhat diffuse. More clues can be found on the underside of a leaf. With downy mildew, lesions first appear sunken and slightly water-soaked. Leaves take on a scorched appearance as the disease progresses. There are many fungicides that can be used in a preventative spray program to keep downy mildew out of the field.

Corrections to last week's answer: Wendel Smith, Lawrence Co. agent, questioned the recommendation to plant the corn deeper (2-4") to prevent falling over. He was right! Planting this deep could may reduce your stand, depending on your soil type and the type of corn you are planting. Standard (su), sugary enhanced (se) and synergistic types should be planted 1" deep in clay, 1-1/2" deep in sandy loam, and 2" deep in sandy soils. Supersweets (sh2) are less vigorous and should be planted 1/2" shallower than the other types. Kevin Hosey from SeedWay weighs in on the variety choices for replanting. He says, “I think the wrong thing to plant in corn this late as they will probably be smaller than normal for most growers. BC0805 is a good choice up to the last planting date. I’ve seen some beautiful fields of it this year with minimal need for worm control. We are probably getting past the last planting date that it will make before frost, however, as it is an 80 day variety.” He also warns that, when planted late, Ambrosia can have problems with tip fill. Thanks, Wendel and Kevin!

Question of the Week

Q: Can squash and cucumbers cross pollinate? -M.H.

A: I have gotten this question quite a few times this season. This is a good question as the Cucurbitaceae is a tricky family. The short answer to the question is ‘no’ squash and cucumbers will not cross pollinate. In fact, in ‘Pollination of Vegetable Crops’ by Wayne McLaurin, University of Georgia, he says pumpkins and squashes do not cross-pollinate with cucumbers, watermelons or citron. Watermelons and citron both belong to the same genus Citrullus and, therefore, will cross-pollinate each other. Muskmelons and Casaba melons will cross since they are both in the genus Cucumis & in the same species melo. When you start talking about cross pollination between squashes and pumpkins, things get a bit hairy. The squashes and pumpkins belong to 4 species of the genus Cucurbita and some of these will cross while others will not. This handy diagram from ‘Pollination of Vegetable Crops’ shows which species will cross with which.

Crop Report

The abundance of crops that are currently available have Farmers Markets bursting at the seams with choices. Sweet corn, okra, turnip and collard greens, tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, onions, zucchini, peppers and all types of melons are plentiful right now. Late plantings continue for tomatoes and peppers, while others are beginning to plan for their fall crops. Remember, take time as you are harvesting to scout for insects and diseases. Keep an eye out especially for downy mildew, which is heading this way (see page 1)!

Weather Report

This week we are going to keep our fingers crossed that those “chances” for thunderstorms produce some tangible accumulation of rain across the state. High’s across much of the state will be in the mid-80’s most of the week, creeping towards the 90’s by week’s end. Low’s will stay in the upper 60’s to low 70’s. The Plateau will have a slightly better chance for rain than other areas and high’s in the low 80’s and low’s in the mid– to upper 60’s. We sure need the rain, but remember, moisture can bring on new pest problems that we haven’t had to deal with yet this year. Be alert to what changes you may see in the field!
Upcoming Events

**TN Agricultural Enhancement Program-- Producer Diversification Cost Share Program**
Applications accepted: July 2 - August 31 (postmarked)
Increase your farm income by expanding and improving your operation through production of diversified agricultural products. The TDA is providing cost share funds for farmers to install farm infrastructure, purchase specialty equipment and market their diversified farm products. **The maximum cost share available per producer is $10,000 per fiscal year.** New this year! Producers meeting special requirements in the priority areas of Agritourism, Goats & Sheep, Organics, and Viticulture are eligible for reimbursement of 50% cost share, up to the maximum of $15,000 per fiscal year. **Don’t miss out!**
Additional details at www.state.tn.us/agriculture/enhancement/growth.html.

**National Association of County Agriculture Agents Annual Meeting/Professional Improvement Conference**, July 15-19, 2007, Grand Rapids, MI
For details, visit www.naccaa2007.msu.edu.

**Small Business Development Workshop**, July 17, 2007, Agricultural Information Technology Center on TSU main campus, Nashville, TN
Pre-registration is required by July 13, 2007 to get number of attendees as well as a number for lunch. Please call Ms. Linda Buchanan at 615-963-1827 to reserve your seat and lunch.

**AgTechnology Field Day**, July 19, 2007, Agricenter International, Memphis, TN
For more information, contact John Bradley, at jbradley@agricenter.org or 901.757.7754.

For more information, contact Keith Richards at keith@ssawg.org or 479-587-0888.

**2007 Annual Small Farm Expo/Small farmer Recognition Program**, August 2, 2007, TSU Research and Demonstration Farm, Ashland City, TN
For more information and registration, contact Hilda Gooch at 615.963.5530 or agooch@tnstate.edu.

**Steak and Potatoes Field Day**, August 7, 2007, Plateau Research and Education Center, Crossville, TN
For more information, visit www.agriculture.utk.edu/news/FieldDays/.

For details visit www.conferences.uidaho.edu/PAA.

**NC State University Asparagus Twilight Meeting**, August 16, 2007, Roxboro, NC
Learn about growing and marketing asparagus, including site and soil considerations, fertility requirements, insect, disease, weed control, harvesting, marketing, and cost of growing. For more information, contact Carl Cantaluppi at carl.cantaluppi@ncsu.edu or call 919.603.1350.

**Sunbelt Ag Expo- 30th Anniversary Show**, October 16-18, 2007, Moultrie, GA
For more information visit www.sunbeltexpo.com or call 229.985.1968.

**International Irrigation Show**, December 9-11, 2007, San Diego, CA
For details, call 703.536.7080 or visit http://www.irrigation.org.

**Tennessee Fruit and Vegetable Association Convention**, December 9-11, 2007, Nashville Airport Marriott, Nashville, TN

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.