

2012 Illinois Small Fruit And Strawberry Schools

URBANA, ILL.

The 2012 Illinois Small Fruit and Strawberry Schools will be held March 6 and 7 at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon, IL. They will provide two days of educational sessions on growing and marketing small fruit crops, including strawberries, in the Midwest. These schools offer information for anyone interested in small fruit or strawberry production from novice to established producer. The educational sessions can benefit people interested in developing viable income producing enterprises on their small farm, or those that are interested in developing greater diversification of their large farming operations. They will also provide information of interest to established growers. Presentations will be provided by specialists from University of Arkansas, University of Illinois, and also industry leaders.

The Illinois Small Fruit School will be on March 6. It will feature a full day of educational sessions and provide information on small fruit crops that can be profitably grown in Illinois. The first educational session will begin at 9:30 a.m. with information on expanding your small fruit sales. Other presentations for the day will include pruning small fruit, starting a small fruit business, and fertility management for your small fruit. There will also be educational talks on the research of small fruit production in high tunnels, managing spider mites and

other fruit pests in high tunnels, and also information on the GAP program (Good Agricultural Practices). The educational sessions will end at 5:15 p.m.

The Illinois Strawberry School will be held March 7 with the first session kicking off at 8:30 a.m. Presentations will include information on risk of herbicide drift, weed control, strawberry plug plant production, managing fertility in strawberries, and strawberry plasticulture. Bill Bass, who is one of the most experienced strawberry plasticulture producers in the Midwest, will share what he has learned in 20 years of experience with raising strawberries on plastic mulch. Educational sessions will end at 4:15 p.m. In addition to the educational sessions, there will be a trade show both days featuring vendors offering products, supplies, and services to small fruit and strawberry growers.

The pre-registration fee is \$35 per farm family and includes admission to the educational sessions and trade show along with one copy each of the 2012 Midwest Commercial Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide. Registration forms need to be mailed by March 1, 2012, to receive the early bird rate. The same day registration fee will be \$40 per farm family.

For more information on these schools, contact Jeff Kindhart at 618/695-2441 or email jkindhar@illinois.edu. △



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