

VEGETABLE PRODUCTION COURSE FOR BEGINNERS

Course Description

This vegetable production course is designed to benefit beginner vegetable producers who have 0-3 years of vegetable growing experience or no formal training in agriculture. The participants will learn answers to the basic questions about farm business planning, planning and preparing for vegetable farm, warm and cool-season vegetable production techniques, season extension, identification of biotic and abiotic issues, and marketing.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Develop a farm business plan, which will help you keep records, manage time more effectively, and price products.
- Explain the characteristics of a suitable site for commercial vegetable crop production and adjust as needed.
- Perform soil sampling protocols for nutrient analysis.
- Explain full season tasks involved in vegetable farming including planting, in-season care, harvesting, and post-harvest considerations for the warm-season and cool-season vegetables.
- Scout and identify biotic and abiotic issues.
- Explain tools for season extension.
- Understand different strategies, resources, options, and models for direct-to-consumer retail.
- Identify additional reliable and fact-based informational resources on topics related to vegetable farming.

TABLE OF CONTENT

A. ONLINE COMPONENT

1. Pretest: 25 questions
2. Farm business planning: Developing a farm business plan and enterprise budgeting
3. Plan and prepare for vegetable farm: Site selection, soil test, and cover crops
4. Warm season vegetables: Crop selection, planting to harvesting and post-harvest management
5. Cool-season vegetables: Crop selection, planting to harvesting and post-harvest management
6. Identification of pests and abiotic problems: Identification of diseases, insects, nutritional and other issues
7. Season extension: Differences among low, caterpillar, and high tunnel; Opportunities and challenges in high tunnel growing; Micro-environment management
8. Marketing: Different strategies, resources, options, and models for direct-to-consumer retail.
9. Post-test: 25 questions

B. HANDS-ON COMPONENT (Must have the ability to travel to the farm located in New Hartford, CT)

1. Soil test: Soil sampling for soil test and interpret soil test results
2. Pruning and Stalking tomatoes
3. Irrigation and fertigation
4. Scouting: Identify disease, insect damage, or abiotic issues

COURSE DATES (2020)

March 5-12: Online pre-test will be available from Mar. 5 to be completed by Mar. 12, 10 am (before the in person meeting)

March 12: Meet and greet! In person meeting at Tolland County Extension Center, 24 Hyde Ave, Vernon, CT 06066 from 10 am to 12 pm on Mar.12. Module 1 (in person). Those who cannot meet in person can take Module 1 online.

March 13 - April 7: Modules 2-6 (online only)

April 8: In person meeting at Tolland County Extension Center, 24 Hyde Ave, Vernon, CT 06066 from 10 am to 12 pm on Apr. 8. Module 7 (in person). Those who cannot meet in person can take Module 7 online.

April 8-15: Online post-test will be available from Apr. 8 to be completed by Apr. 15 11:59 pm.

May (TBD): Grower led one-day hands-on training at a commercial farm which will cover soil test, pruning and stalking tomatoes, irrigation and fertigation, and scouting for disease, insect damage, or abiotic issues.

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

[Abby Beissinger](#), Assistant Extension Educator, UConn

Bruce Gresczyk Jr., [Gresczyk Farms](#)

[Jiff Martin](#), Associate Extension Educator, UConn

[Joe Bonelli](#), Associate Extension Educator, UConn

Kip Kolesinskis, Consulting Conservation Scientist

[Shuresh Ghimire](#), Assistant Extension Educator, UConn

Steve Munno, [Massaro Community Farm](#)

Please contact the course coordinator, Shuresh Ghimire (shuresh.ghimire@uconn.edu, 860-870-6933) with any questions about this course.