

Kentucky Fruit Facts

September-October 2025

<https://horticulture.ca.uky.edu/ky-fruit-facts>

Daniel Becker, Editor

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Fruit Crop News

Daniel Becker, UK Extension Associate

With the transition into the middle part of September we have at least nominally arrived at Autumn. There may still be some hot days ahead, but nights at least are becoming noticeably cooler. Apples are entering their main harvest period with properly ripened Golden Delicious, Crimson Crisp, and Early Fuji to look forward to. Some of the later peach cultivars like Victoria are still hanging around. A grower friend in Southern Illinois mentioned recently that this was one of the best years for peaches he has ever had and that he was still picking; apples were so-so. With cooler temperatures, primocane-bearing blackberries should also be experiencing increased productivity. Quality was poor throughout much of August due to summer heat. Daily high temperatures above 85°F negatively affect flower primordia development inside buds while inhibiting pollen viability, pollen tube growth, and ovary survival of open flowers. Yield and fruit quality are reduced due to poor fruit set, berry size, and drupelet fill on primocanes. Delaying primocane emergence by mechanical or chemical means and tipping canes and laterals can postpone harvest until conditions are favorable for production but can reduce yield if practiced too late.

Much of the Western end of the state is abnormally dry. Some areas that had pop-up thunderstorms are doing fine, but other areas including the UKREC are going on 25 or even 50 days with

less than a tenth of an inch of rain. This makes it the fourth year with drought conditions going into the fall season. Those who can irrigate are doing so regularly to maintain soil moisture and stave off drought stress. On grower visits I have noticed some apples showing signs of sunburn and internal breakdown, particularly on Golden Delicious, Gala, and GoldRush (Figure 1). Low tissue calcium level also plays a role in cell wall integrity and internal breakdown as the nutrient is transported within plants through water transpiration.



Figure 1. Sunburn and internal breakdown symptoms on Gala apples (Photo: Daniel Becker, UK)

Due to the dry conditions, surrounding plants, including grass, are dry and crispy which is causing some common and less common leaf feeders to show up in the orchard. Colonies of aphids are appearing on young apple trees, attracted by lush green growth (Figure 2). Yellow striped armyworm feeding has been minimal on apples but was severe enough on emerging blackberry primocanes to warrant sprays for control (Figures 3 and 4).

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Figure 2. Aphid colony feeding on an apple shoot tip. (Photo: Daniel Becker, UK)



Figure 3. Yellow striped armyworms feeding on an apple leaf. (Photo: Daniel Becker, UK)



Figure 4. Yellow striped army worm damage to leaves and shoot tips of young blackberry primocanes (Photo: Daniel Becker, UK)

The University of Kentucky Center for Crop Diversification (CCD) is looking for input on its price reporting services. The CCD has been reporting sales prices from farmers markets and produce auctions for nearly 25 years. The purpose of the survey is to try and see how people use the price reports and what impact they have. If interested, use this [link](#) to take the survey or link through the QR code on the attached flier.

As a final note, take a look at the upcoming meetings section as there are several field days and meetings scheduled across the state in the coming months that should be of interest to horticulture producers. Fliers advertising these meetings that provide links to registration are also included at the end of this newsletter.

Upcoming Meetings

Times are listed in Central Time (CT) or Eastern Time (ET) depending on location.

Sept. 19 (Saturday). Soilless Berry Production field day. 5:00-6:30 pm ET. 270 N Cleveland Rd.,

Lexington, KY 40509. The greenhouse and controlled environment team is hosting a field day on soilless berry and commercial indoor berry production. If you are interested, please fill out the registration form through the link or QR code on the flyer attached. <https://forms.gle/syfAgW2azDEyjCB29>. With any questions, please reach out to qinglu.ying@uky.edu or arundathi.sharma@uky.edu.

Sept. 23 (Tuesday). KY Mechanical Weed Control Field Day. 8:00 am – 4:00 pm ET. UK Horticulture Research Farm, 4321 Emmert Farm Ln., Lexington, KY 40514. Tickets are \$55 with lunch included. To register visit this [website](#). For questions contact Alexis Sheffield, aeam222@uky.edu.

Oct. 16 (Thursday). Ashbourne Farms Orchard Field Day. 4:00 – 7:00 pm ET. Ashbourne Farms, 3801 Old Westport Road, La Grange, KY 40031. Join University of Kentucky Fruit Specialists, the Organic Association of Kentucky, and the Kentucky Horticulture Council for an orchard field day at Ashbourne Farms. We'll learn about the new **high-density orchard system** and compare the system to their traditional orchard system. **Integrated organic and conventional approaches** to orchard establishment and management will be the focus for this event as well. We'll also learn about site & variety selection, pre-plant considerations, and trellis design & installation. Other topics may include planting, training & pruning young trees, fertility & irrigation management, spraying in young orchards, and pest & disease management. This event is great for **new growers** interested in starting orchards and for **experienced growers** who want to learn the most up-to-date techniques. Pre-registration is required by visiting <https://forms.gle/zPmSpoSApmAhvxsJA>. For questions about this event, reach out to Dakota Moore (dakota@kyhortcouncil.org).

Oct. 25 (Saturday). Fall Kentucky Nut Grower's Association Meeting. The meeting will be held on Saturday at the Caldwell County Extension Office, 1025 US HWY 62 W, Princeton, KY 42445 (270-365-2787) from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. CT. The program will include nut displays, visiting with fellow nut growers, a talk on, "Understanding The Pecan Past to See The Future of Pecans" by David

Hughes from Rock Bridge Trees, a tour of the UKREC pecan planting, a potluck luncheon, and door prizes. Anyone interested in home or commercial nut production is welcome. For questions contact John Strang, jstrang@uky.edu (859) 396-9311.

Dec. 9-11. Great Lakes EXPO. DeVos Place Convention Center, 303 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Registration is now open with an early bird discount running through November 15. Book your room early as ones near the convention center always sell out quickly. For more information, visit <https://glexpo.com/>.

Jan. 11 – 13 (Sunday – Tuesday), 2026. Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference. Mark your calendars, the Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference returns to the Sloan Convention Center at 1021 Wilkinson Trace in Bowling Green, KY 42103. Note that the dates for the conference have been pushed back a week from previous years. Monday and Tuesday, January 12-13 are the main conference days with pre-conference sessions on Sunday, January 11.

Jan. 28-30, 2026. From Food to Flowers: Illinois Everything Local Conference. Bank of Springfield Center, 1 Convention Center Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701. To register for this event, visit <https://specialty-growers.squarespace.com/elc2026>.

Feb. 11-12, 2026. North American Raspberry & Blackberry Association (NARBA) Conference. Embassy Suites by Hilton San Luis Obispo, 333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93405. Further information about registration, accommodation, and scheduled events can be found on the [conference website](#).

Pesticide App for Label Mitigations

EPA released the [Pesticide App for Label Mitigations \(PALM\)](#), a mobile-friendly tool to serve as a one-stop shop that helps farmers and applicators use EPA's [mitigation menu](#) to reduce pesticide exposure to nontarget species from agricultural crop uses. PALM combines the functionality of the [spray drift and runoff calculators](#) in a mobile-friendly and easy-to-use web interface. This application also provides a

useful summary to show how users calculated their runoff and erosion mitigation points or ecological spray drift buffer reductions and what field characteristics or application parameters are applicable to their individual applications.

These calculators are tools for informational purposes to assist pesticide users in determining whether the necessary level of mitigation has been met before applying a pesticide product. Pesticide users remain responsible for ensuring that all pesticide labeling requirements are met. Not all labels permit use of runoff/erosion mitigation measures or spray drift reduction.

Spotted Lanternfly Management Options

Jonathan L. Larson, Entomology Extension Specialist

As spotted lanternfly (SLF) populations grow in the Bluegrass, there are lots of questions about what can be done to deal with this troublesome and eye-catching bug (Figure 1). Responses can vary by the location of the problem and the severity of the infestation. In counties where there have not been reports before, it would be appreciated if folks would reach out to the Office of the State Entomologist or the UK Department of Entomology. If you live in an already reported county and have hundreds of spotted insects hopping around your trees, there are also some options for management.



Figure 1. Spotted lanternfly is an invasive pest that is beginning to appear more frequently in northern

Kentucky. They have a unique mixture of spots and stripes and red-black wings as adults. (Photo: Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org)

What is SLF and what is the situation in Kentucky?

As [previously mentioned](#), this insect is an invasive species that has been known in Kentucky since 2023. Populations were first found in Gallatin County, though there have been subsequent finds in Carrol, Boone, Kenton, Henry, Owen, Grant, and Campbell Counties in 2024 (Figure 2). The early years of the invasion are marked by noticing the pest in more and more locations in a county. After about five years, the populations should be quite high in invaded areas before a slow decline. In our infested counties, things are still in the “ramping up stage” of the invasive species roller coaster. While SLF is unlikely to kill many trees in Kentucky, the size of their populations and the prodigious amounts of honeydew they produce can be annoying.

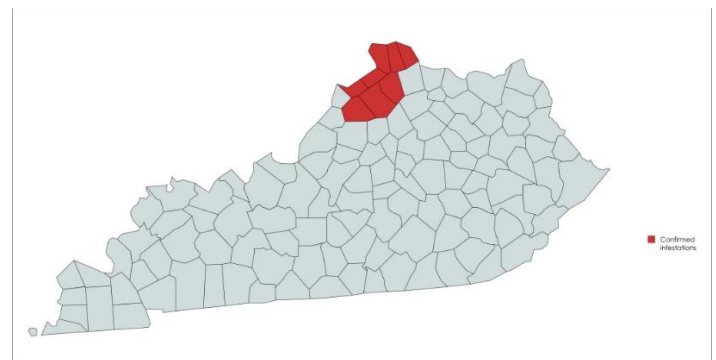


Figure 2. Northern Kentucky counties are experiencing an invasion of spotted lanternfly. The areas with confirmed infestations are highlighted in red.

Those finding a spotted lanternfly in counties not highlighted in the map can help by alerting entomologists in the state at reportapest@uky.edu or consulting with your local Extension office. When making a report, please include an image or a physical sample of the suspect, otherwise it will be difficult to confirm the problem. It is also important to include geographic information about where it was found so entomologists can travel to confirm the severity of the situation.

Managing SLF in Kentucky

Residents in counties with growing infestations will find predominantly or only adults as of August 2025 and going into the fall. SLF will mostly be found feeding on tree of heaven, black walnut, grape, river birch, red or silver maples, willow or sumac at this time of year, though it's not impossible you will find them on other plants.

Kentuckians can choose to pluck and squish SLF or to pull them off plants and put them in buckets of soapy water. Penn State has also provided detailed instructions on how to build a “circle trap” to help suppress problematic populations. Check those out [here](#).

If you choose to use insecticides, there can be two approaches: treating host plants with systemic products or treating insects and plants with contact insecticides (Figure 3).



Figure 3. When dealing with large numbers of spotted lanternflies, they can be treated with various insecticides to help suppress their populations. (Photo: Louise Bugbee, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org)

Trees can be treated by certified arborists with a systemic product containing the active ingredient dinotefuran until the end of September and starting again in July of next year. This product is not available for the general public to purchase and treat with themselves. It is labeled for use in Kentucky and for spotted lanternfly control specifically. Depending on the size of the tree being treated, the application may

be made as a soil drench, trunk spray, or trunk injection.

There are some options to directly spray spotted lanternfly as well. These sprays do pose a potential hazard to non-target organisms (birds, butterflies, bees, fireflies, people, etc.) so consider the severity of your situation before choosing to treat. That being said, products that contain the active ingredients bifenthrin or beta-cyfluthrin will offer the most efficacy and last for longer periods of time on plant surfaces. These are pyrethroid products; they will work if sprayed on top of the insect or if the pests crawl through it later. Pyrethrin, an organic product, provides similar levels of suppression but lasts for much less time. Other organic options include neem oil or insecticidal soap, though they may not be as effective or last long after application.

Preventing Postharvest Disease Losses in Fruit Crops

Kim Leonberger, Plant Pathology Extension Associate and Nicole Gauthier, Extension Plant Pathologist

Fruits are often soft, perishable, and particularly susceptible to a range of damage during harvest and storage. Growers can experience postharvest crop losses between 25% and 50%. A significant percentage of postharvest losses are caused by plant diseases. Infection by disease-causing pathogens can occur in the field and/or through wounds during harvest. Under moist conditions or high humidity, these infections can develop into molds, rots, or other decay. Even produce destined for fresh market can develop postharvest diseases during short-term storage.

Infection in the Field

Plant diseases such as fruit rots, leaf spots, and root rots can occur while plants are growing or while fruit are maturing (Figure 1). Infections can remain latent (dormant) until produce reaches a particular stage of maturity or until certain environmental conditions are reached.



Figure 1. Bitter rot can begin in the field or greenhouse and advance in storage. (Photo: Nicole Gauthier, UK)

Management

- Maintain a disease management program all season.
- Discard diseased and damaged produce as soon as it is visible.
- Avoid mixing diseased produce with healthy produce (e.g., in storage bins).
- Apply fungicides at harvest or after harvest if field disease was present.

Infection During Harvest & Handling

Wounds, bruising, desiccation, and exposure to temperature extremes can weaken produce and allow pathogen entry, resulting in disease. Many of the same plant pathogens that infect crops in the field can also infect wounded or damaged produce during harvest. Disease may appear soon after produce is moved to the cooler or storage, or there may be a delay in disease development.

Management

- Minimize wounds and bruises during harvest, handling, and packaging.
- Raise bins and buckets off the ground during harvest.
- Cool produce as soon as possible.

- Avoid leaving harvested produce in the heat or sun.
- Wash dirty or muddy produce and dry thoroughly before storage.
- Wash and sanitize bins and equipment before each harvest.

Disease in Storage

Improper storage conditions can provide ideal environments for disease-causing organisms to infect (Figure 2). Healthy produce can become diseased in storage when moisture is too high, temperatures are too warm, and pathogens are present.



Figure 2. Conditions such as excess moisture and improper storage may allow for disease development. (Photo: Nicole Gauthier, UK)

Management

- Separate produce by type, harvest date, and field origin.
- Cool produce as soon as possible while remaining within the safe range for the specific produce.
- Monitor storage temperature and humidity.
- Increase ventilation.

- Raise produce off the floor.
- Reduce surface wetness by maintaining equipment and keeping produce dry.
- Follow a strict sanitation program, which is critical.
- If fruits and vegetables must be washed before storage, they should be completely dry before storage.
- Keep all surfaces clean; sanitize regularly.
- Wash and sanitize all bins, tools, and harvest materials before bringing them into coolers or storage units.
- Inspect stored produce regularly and discard damaged and diseased material immediately.

Additional Resources

- Postharvest Disease Losses in Fruit & Vegetable Crops ([PPFS-GEN24](#))
- Midwest Commercial Fruit Pest Management Guide ([ID-232](#))

Receiving Fruit Facts on the Internet

By subscribing to the email notification service, you will receive an email announcement when each new issue is posted on the web with a link.

To subscribe, send an email message:

TO: listerv@lsv.uky.edu
 SUBJECT: Fruit Facts
 MESSAGE: subscribe KY-FRUITFACTS
 Followed by a blank line

OR to unsubscribe, the lines:

Signoff KY-FRUITFACTS

Followed by a blank line

You should receive confirmation by return email. If you have a problem, or if you wish to communicate with a person about “fruitfacts”, the owner’s address (the TO: line of the message is: owner-ky-fruit-facts@lsv.uky.edu).

Field Day

at Ashbourne Farms



Thursday, October 16



4-7 PM ET



Ashbourne Farms

3801 Old Westport Road, La Grange

**Registration is required by visiting
bit.ly/ashbourne-farms-field-day or
scanning the QR code**



Join UK Fruit Specialists, Kentucky Horticulture Council, and the Organic Association of Kentucky for a **Field Day at Ashbourne Farms in La Grange** on October 16.

We'll learn about their **new high-density orchard system** and compare the system to their traditional orchard system. **Integrated organic and conventional approaches** to orchard establishment and management will be a focus for this event as well.

This event is great for **new growers** interested in starting orchards and for **experienced growers** who want to learn the most up-to-date techniques.

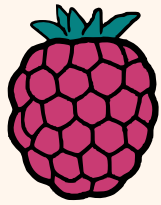
See and learn about:

- site and variety selection
- pre-plant considerations
- trellis design and installation
- planting
- training and pruning young trees
- fertility and irrigation management
- spraying in young orchards
- pest and disease management
- & more!

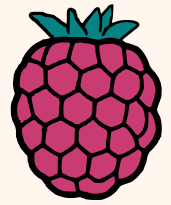


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GREENHOUSE



Berries



◆ — Field Day on soilless production basics — ◆

📅 Friday, September 19, 2025

🕒 5:00–6:30PM

📍 270 N Cleveland Rd, Lexington

- Meet Greenhouse Extension team
- Tour a raspberry and blackberry operation
- Snacks provided

Register: <https://forms.gle/syfAgW2azDEyjCB29> or →



Questions? Email/call/text:
qinglu.ying@uky.edu
arundathi.sharma@uky.edu
(747) 777-3542

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SUPPORT KENTUCKY PRICE REPORTING

The UK Center for Crop Diversification has been reporting prices for nearly 25 years. We report on **Farmers Markets** and **Produce Auctions** in the Kentucky. We are trying to see how people use the price reports and what impact they have.

WHY HELP?

- Improves price reports in the state
- Helps continue & expand reporting
- **Only takes about 5 minutes!**

TAKE THE SURVEY

Click here
or



Contact brett.wolff@uky.edu for questions

