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**PRACTICAL FARMERS**  
*of Iowa*

The Practical  
**HORTI-  
CULTURIST**  
March 2022

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



### **Meet a Co-Hort: Dean Henry**

**Dean and Judy Henry** established the Berry Patch Farm in the early 1970s. With their son Mike, they produce a wide variety of perennial berries, tree fruit, and pumpkins. Berry Patch produce is available at markets, through local CSAs, and on the farm through u-pick or picked to order.

### **Something you're excited to try this year:**

Day-neutral strawberries. We've always tried different methods of growing strawberries. Some work in our climate and some don't. We had a terrible experience with day-neutral strawberries 20 years ago, but we're going to try again. There are 2 or 3 new varieties, and we're going to try growing them on plastic this year.

### **Something you would change about your industry:**

I've always been kinda critical of people who mislead the public about the product they produce being perfect and being raised perfectly, but [in reality] the grower is really at the mercy of the environment. The industrialization of horticulture is a real threat to the home grower and the small farmer.



### **Favorite PFI memory**

The social time at the dinners at the PFI annual conference and meeting other people in our type of farming, who share the things you like to do and think about.

*"If you want someone with experience, you want someone who's made a lot of mistakes. That's how you learn."*

- Dean Henry

## **PROGRAM UPDATES**

### **Last call for Farm Business Coaching applications**



The Farm Business Coaching program aims to help farmers strengthen their businesses through in-depth consultations followed by business development coaching with experts.

[Learn more about whether this program fits your farming operation and apply here.](#)

**Applications are due March 28, 2022.**

**Apply by March 28**

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**Hort farmer meet-ups a success**



PFI partnered with farmers around the state to host six meet-ups over six weeks. In all, over 100 horticulture farmers gathered with peers from their area in homes, packsheds, and coffee shops to discuss ideas, compare plans and support one another through shared optimism, passions and suggestions. These conversations help fuel plans for the growing season as well as upcoming PFI field days and programming.

**Want to host a meet-up in your town next year? Email [jacqueline@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:jacqueline@practicalfarmers.org)**

## Field day planning is underway



As the weather warms, PFI staff are busily assembling field days - our signature farmer-led events. Horticulture field days will address the full range of production and crops, from vegetables and flowers to apples, berries and nuts.

**Look for the full schedule on our website mid-May**, with the printed field day guide arriving by June 1.

**Not on our mailing list?** Call us at (515) 232-5661 or email [debra@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:debra@practicalfarmers.org)

## IN THE FIELD

### Snapdragon variety trial

**Jill Beebout and Anna Hankins & Shae Pesek** selected three snapdragon varieties and evaluated their performance during 2021 in terms of marketable stems produced for inclusion in bouquets.

**The objective of this project** was to determine, by farm, which of three snapdragon varieties produced the



most number of marketable stems for cut-flower production.

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## Sweet potato enterprise budgets: What are the costs and returns of this popular CSA crop?



**Kate Edwards, Emily Fagan, Jordan Scheibel** and **Jon Yagla** tracked expenses, labor, yields and revenue for sweet potato production on their farms during 2019.



From this information, we calculated net income. Each farm planted and managed sweet potatoes according to their own timing, markets and preferred practices, [which are detailed in this research report.](#)

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## Annual wildflower and herb mix for pollinators



**Jill Beebout, Alice McGary, Rob Faux** and **Sarah Foltz Jordan** [assessed flower establishment and attractiveness to insects](#) on their farms in 2017.

Four diversified vegetable farms planted strips of an annual flower mix.

Annual wildflower and herb plantings are an easy and inexpensive way to rapidly increase the amount of forage for bees and other beneficial insects on farms.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*All events listed in CDT*

**Mar 29: Farminar - Working Lands Conservation Programs**

Hosted by: Practical Farmers of Iowa  
7 - 8:30 p.m. | Online

**Mar 29: Webinar - Fruit Tree Webinars**

Hosted by: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Online

**Mar 31: Webinar - Plant Breeding Webinars**

Hosted by: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Online

**Apr 1: Workshop - Soil Talk 1.0 for Women Farmland Owners**

Hosted by: Jean Eells, E Resources Group, LLC  
Noon - 2 p.m. | Online

**Apr 4: Workshop - Tips for Food and Farm-Based Business Success**

Hosted by: University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension  
10 - 11:15 a.m. | Online

**Apr 8: Webinar - Strategic Thinking for the Farm Business: Putting Your Farm Values to Work**

Hosted by: University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension  
11 a.m. - noon | Online

**Apr 15: Workshop - Soil Talk 2.0 for Women Farmland Owners**

Hosted by: Jean Eells, E Resources Group, LLC  
Noon - 2 p.m. | Online

[View more upcoming events](#)

## POLL

How far would you travel for a PFI field day this summer?

**Who has the time? I'm staying home.**

Select

**Only going if it's in my backyard (< 30 min drive)**

Select

**Interested in what's happening in my part of the state (< 1 hr drive)**

Select

**Love to see what's happening in other areas (2-3 hr drive)**

Select

**Let's roadtrip! (3 hr drive)**

Select

Send us your poll ideas! We want to know what YOU want to know. Reply to this email with your ideas for the next poll.

STAY CONNECTED



## CONTACT US

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