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The Practical

HORTI-  
CULTURIST

June 2022

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*

## Meet a Co-Hort: Mark Westbrook

**Mark Westbrook** owns and operates [Solstice Farm](#) near Waverly, IA. Mark and his family grow mushrooms, orchard fruit and berries, poultry for eggs and meat, all of which they sell primarily at farmers' markets. As a participant in PFI's Farm Business Coaching program, Mark is preparing to take the next step to establish a juicing and cider facility.



**Why you grow horticulture crops, in 5 or fewer words?:** Perennial crops continue to reward!

**Something you're excited about trying this year:** Tall-spindle apple production! This high-density technique places trees in dwarf rootstock just two and a half feet apart and results in production when the trees are just about three years old. We won't have to wait long for a crop!



**What you would change about your industry?:** I wish consumers valued flavor and growing practices over fruit appearance.

**Favorite PFI memory:** I loved listening to the late **Michael Phillips at the PFI conference** a few years ago. His writings are foundational in our understanding of chemical-free fruit production, and it was special to see and hear how his wit and knowledge came through in person.

**Favorite crop and why?:** Right now, when orchard crops aren't in season, it's oyster mushrooms. They produce so consistently and customers at the market are excited to get them before they sell out (which they do every week).

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Field days throughout the season!



Have you marked your calendar AND RSVP'd to your favorite [PFI Field Days](#) for this summer? As you can see, Lia and Taylor are ready to hit the road for the next field day, and we hope to see YOU there.

Visit [our website](#) to RSVP on each field day page.

## IN THE FIELD

### Honeyberry field day a success!



The June 16 field day at **Jeff and Deb Sindelar's** farm, titled "[Honeyberries and Other Perennial Berries](#)," was the first PFI hort event of the summer, and what a great way to start!

About 40 guests learned about honeyberries and hardy kiwis, and got to taste a range of homemade treats.

Three lucky attendees won a honeyberry bush to take home, including **Jeff Jensen**, pictured here with **Deb Sindelar**. Thanks to the Sindelars for sharing their knowledge and hospitality!

Be sure to sign up for a few upcoming [PFI Field Days](#) this year!

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### Notes on post-harvest flower handling



A recent article in *Growing for Market* magazine titled "[Cater to the special needs of flowers at harvest](#)," highlights how to care for cut flowers to get the most out of them. From harvest timing to hydration, this is a nice resource to compare notes on flower processing.

## Save the date - A Midwestern favorite returns!

Reserve September 14 for a trip to the Michigan State University's Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center at Benton Harbor, Michigan, to attend the 2022 Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day.



[Learn more and register here](#). Registration prices increase after August 15.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### A flower farmer's vision



July 17 | 2-4 p.m. | Oskaloosa, IA

Join us for [a field day at Meredith Nunnikhoven's farm](#) to learn the sustainability ethic and long-term vision that's guided her as she converted a portion of her family's conventional row crop farm into a chemical-free flower farm.

Come learn about Iowa-focused flower farming, and stick around for an ice cream social afterward. [Please RSVP here by July 12.](#)

### Upcoming horticulture events:

*All events listed in CDT*

**June 23: Field Day - [Summer Beginning Farmer Social](#)**  
5:30-7:30 p.m. | Des Moines, IA

**July 6: Seminar - [Equipping RDs + Public Health Professionals as Food Systems Leaders](#)**  
8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. | Ankeny, IA

**June 24: Field Day - [Iowa Organic Association](#)**

Hosted by: Iowa Organic Association  
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. | Kalona, IA

**June 25: Field Day - [Connecting Agriculture and Conservation](#)**

10 a.m.-1 p.m. | Radcliffe, IA

**June 26: Field Day - [Hydroponic Tomatoes, Farmers Markets & Agritourism](#)**

2-4 p.m. | Griswold, IA

**June 29: Webinar - [Understanding the Nutrition-Health-Agriculture Nexus](#)**

10-11:30 a.m | Online

**July 6: Field Day - [Getting Started With Lavender, Flowers and Berries](#)**

10 a.m. - noon | Lisbon

**July 15-16: Virtual Conference - [Seed Savers Exchange](#)**

Hosted by: Seed Savers Exchange  
Register by July 13 | Online

**July 17: Field Day - [Flower Farming With a Long-Term View](#)**

2-4 p.m. | Oskaloosa, IA

[View more upcoming events](#)

## POLL

Your single largest market segment is

**Farmer's Market**

Select

**CSA**

Select

**Wholesale**

Select

**U-pick or On-farm sales**

Select

**Online or a la carte sales**

Select

**Previous poll results:**

**The amount of rainfall you've had at your farm this season is:**

- Just right - 33.3%
- Way to little - 33.3%
- Way too much - 33.3%

*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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