HUTCHESON MEMORIAL FOREST
A Preserved Forest Gets a New Web Site

The Hutcheson Memorial Forest (HMF) is a unique area of Somerset County, consisting of one of the last uncut forests in the Mid-Atlantic States, along with the surrounding lands devoted to protection of the old forest and research into ecological interactions necessary to understand the forest. The tract is administered and protected by Rutgers University. It consists of the 26-hectare Mettler’s Woods, the primeval, mixed oak forest, which is one of the last uncut stands of this sort of forest in the United States. It is apparently the only uncut upland forest in New Jersey, and appears on the National Park Service Register of Natural Landmarks.

The old forest is surrounded by more than 70 hectares of young forest, former agricultural fields undergoing plant succession, and the research plots. The forest and surrounding land is one of the most intensively studied areas in North America. For example, the long term studies of birds and vegetation change following agriculture are some of the longest running studies of this kind anywhere. HMF is known worldwide for long-term ecological, botanical and zoological research.

The recorded history of Mettler’s Woods begins in 1701 when the area was acquired by a consortium of Dutch settlers. Descendants of the original settlers maintained the old forest without exploitation. The average age of living white oak trees in the forest is 235 years. Some trees that have died within the past two decades have been as old as 350 years. The old trees record ground fires in their growth rings at about 11 year intervals up to 1711. Native Americans may well have set such fires for improving productivity of the understory or driving game in the region. Other disturbances have included windthrow of old canopy trees by storms, and defoliation by peak gypsy moth populations. No timber has ever been cut, nor the soil turned within the forest.

For more information on this forest, public tours, photos and research, please visit their new web site, http://rci.rutgers.edu/~hmforest/.
PLANT & PEST ADVISORY

This seasonal production management newsletter from Rutgers Cooperative Extension is now available for the 2007 season in four editions: Vegetable Crops (weekly), Fruit (weekly), Landscape, Nursery & Turf (biweekly), and Cranberry (biweekly). Why is “The Plant and Pest Advisory” important to you and your growing success? With this newsletter, you will:

- Stay informed of insect and disease advisories
- Get the latest information on your crop and region
- Reduce costs through IPM and more effective use of pesticides
- Learn effective cultural practices and the latest results of New Jersey crop research
- Improve storage/handling procedures
- Learn new marketing techniques and opportunities
- Be informed of upcoming meetings, seminars and trainings

The Plant & Pest Advisory is a cooperative effort between Rutgers Extension County Agents, research specialists, growers, landscapers and the agricultural services industry. This publication provides you with the timeliest information for all your growing problems and IPM needs. Here’s what some of our satisfied readers have to say:

“IPM practices have reduced pesticide costs 20 – 25%.”

“Saving of time spent researching pest and application needed or not.”

“We’re saving customer’s plants from destruction, saving them replacement costs and saving our reputation.”

“Through suggested timing of insect and fungus monitoring we are able to better manage our nursery.”

“Less chemicals plus timely spraying equals thousands of dollars in savings.”

“Knowing what varieties to use and what varieties to stay away from.”

“By getting timely information I knew early what to look for.”

Please order your subscription soon! There are different rates for email, fax, and mail delivery, and subscriptions range from $11 to $41 depending on your topic and delivery preference. Subscribers receive the current issue on the day of publication (email and fax). For other online users who are not subscribers, the most recent issue will be available for viewing two to three weeks after publication. You will need Adobe Reader to view the issues of this newsletter.

For further information, subscription forms, and back issues of the Rutgers Plant & Pest Advisory, please visit us online at www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/plantandpestadvisory.
State Conservationist Appointed

Mr. Thomas Drewes has been selected as State Conservationist of New Jersey for USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) effective January 21, 2007.

A New Jersey native, Mr. Drewes began his career with the agency in the Garden State when he was hired as a Soil Scientist in Ocean County in 1974. He progressed within the agency in New Jersey, serving as a Soil Conservationist in Cumberland, Salem and Hunterdon Counties, District Conservationist in Somerset, Union and Mercer Counties, and as Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources, for Programs, and for Operations until 2004.

Since 2004 he has worked at NRCS National Headquarters as team leader for the nationwide Conservation Effects Assessment Project in Beltsville, Maryland. Mr. Drewes is a licensed Professional Planner (AICP) and holds a BS in Soil Science from the University of New Hampshire, an MS in Management from Trenton State College, and an MS in Community Planning from Rutgers University.

Since 1935, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has provided leadership to help America's private landowners and managers conserve their soil, water, and other natural resources. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for many voluntary conservation activities.

DOES YOUR SCHOOL COMPETE IN THE ENVIROTHON?

The Envirothon competition was developed in the 1980's to encourage young people to learn more about natural resources and their management, and to consider going on to careers in the environmental field. In addition to test questions based on examination of soils, trees, fish, skeletal samples, and other natural resource materials, the teams must give a verbal presentation regarding an environmental issue. New Jersey's top conservation leaders serve as judges for this testing station, which is designed to enhance teamwork as well as critical thinking and verbal presentation skills.

This outdoor event is sponsored annually by a coalition of organizations including the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts, the State Soil Conservation Committee of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Jersey's 16 Soil Conservation Districts, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Natural resource professionals from these organizations work together throughout the year to develop resource material study guides, local training sessions and the actual testing stations at the event. The annual New Jersey Envirothon is an exciting, hands-on outdoor competition that takes place in May each year in New Jersey. Teams of high school students prepare throughout the academic year with their advisors, studying soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife and environmental issues under the guidance of conservation partnership staff.

High Tech High School of Hudson County, winner of the 2006 NJ Envirothon, went on to win 6th place in the National Envirothon contest. Sparta High School of Sussex County took second place in the NJ competition, while third place went to Kittatinny Regional High School, also of Sussex County.

The 2007 NJ Envirothon will be held Saturday, May 12, 2007, at The Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education, Barnegat, NJ. Registration deadline is March 2, 2007. The Ocean County Soil Conservation District is hosting this year's event.

To find out more about the Envirothon in New Jersey, contact Richard Belcher at (609) 292-5540, Fax: (609) 633-7229 or visit their web site for online resources, study guides, and other Envirothon topics at http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/envirothon/index.html or http://nj.nacdnet.org/envirothon/.
GET TO KNOW YOUR NEW JERSEY FARM SERVICE AGENCY

New Jersey, known as the Garden State, has a vast diversity of landscapes and is a unique combination of densely populated urban centers and open agricultural areas. For a small state, agriculture in New Jersey is quite significant with more than 100 crops being produced. Despite legislative and public pressures, high input costs, and the second highest per-acre market value of farmland in the nation, 17% of New Jersey land is under cultivation and the estimated market value of New Jersey farms is greater than $7 billion with yearly cash receipts approaching $900 million.

New Jersey produces 22% of the blueberries, 5% of the peaches and 2% of greenhouse/nursery crops sold in the US. The Garden State ranks nationally #2 in blueberry production, #3 in cranberries and bell peppers, and #4 in peaches. New Jersey also has the highest concentration of horses in the US, more than even Kentucky!

So why is the Farm Service Agency (FSA) important to producers all across New Jersey? The FSA is a safety outlet for all producers, helping to ensure the well being of American Agriculture, the environment, and the American people through efficient and equitable administration of farm commodity programs; farm ownership, operating, and emergency loans; conservation and environmental programs; emergency and disaster assistance; and domestic and international food assistance and international export credit programs.

FSA’s goals are to stabilize farm income, help farmers conserve land and water resources, provide credit to new or disadvantaged farmers, and to help farm operations recover from the effects of disaster (floods, droughts, hail or ice storms, etc).

Mr. Samuel Conard, a member of the Somerset County Board of Agriculture and Farm Bureau, is our local voice on the NJ State FSA Board. The State FSA office is located at 163 US Highway 130, Bldg. 2, Bordentown, NJ 08505-2248 and can be reached at (609) 298-3446, or (609) 298-8780 Fax. The Hunterdon County FSA office servicing this immediate area is located at 687 Pittstown Rd., Ste. 2, Frenchtown, NJ 08825-4148 and can be reached at (908) 782-4614 or (908) 782-0501 Fax.

For more information on the Farm Service Agency, programs and outreach efforts, please visit them online at http://www.fsa.usda.gov or contact Mr. Paul Hlubik, State FSA Executive Director, by email at paul.hlubik@nj.usda.gov.

Sixteenth Annual Rutgers Turfgrass Symposium

The Center for Turfgrass Science will host this annual conference on Thursday and Friday, January 11 and 12, 2007, in Room 138 of Foran Hall on the Cook Campus of the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.

The Symposium will commence at 7:00 PM on Thursday evening with a Keynote presentation by Dr. William Meyer (Rutgers University). Dr. Meyer, an internationally recognized scientist in the area of turfgrass breeding, will provide a global perspective on advancements in this important field. For more than 30 years, Meyer has served as a turfgrass breeder and administrator in the development of improved turfgrass cultivars, which have directly benefited golf course superintendents throughout the world. Since April 1996, Dr. Meyer has served as Director of the Turfgrass Breeding Project at Rutgers University. This breeding project is the largest and most successful project of its kind on cool-season turf grasses. The keynote will be followed by a social.

Oral presentations will continue on Friday from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. This year's symposium will focus on current turf research accomplishments from a wide range of basic and applied projects. For a complete agenda and on-line registration visit the Center for Turfgrass Science website at www.turf.rutgers.edu.
2007 Perennial Plant of the Year Named

The Perennial Plant Association (www.perennialplant.org) has awarded the title of Perennial Plant of the Year to Nepeta ‘Walker’s Low’. Introduced in 1988 in Europe, Walker’s Low catmint has become increasingly popular with each passing year due to its lovely blue-violet flowers and its long bloom time, attractive grey-green foliage, ease of propagation, lack of pest or disease problems, and low maintenance requirements.

Hardy from USDA Zones 3 to 8, this excellent sun exposure perennial can reach 30 to 36 inches tall and wide - Walker’s Low is named for a garden, not for its size. It prefers well-drained soil with a neutral pH. This is a great plant for perennial borders, and can also be used in herb gardens, rock gardens, as a ground cover, or as a container plant. Its unique qualities include a continuous bloom throughout the season if properly pruned, attracting bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects, but mostly its deer and rabbit resistance. The leaves release a wonderful aroma when crushed. It’s never too early – get ready and Happy Gardening!

THE 5TH ANNUAL NEW JERSEY FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

EDISON, NJ – MAC Events (www.macevents.com) is proud to announce the 5th Annual NJ Flower & Garden Show, set for February 15-18, 2007 at the New Jersey Convention Center at the Raritan Center in Edison, NJ. Spring arrives early again this year, even if we are having warmer weather than expected this winter! Visitors will be greeted by the uplifting sight and smell of thousands of blooming plants and flowers.

The 2007 show theme is "Once Upon A Garden." Inspired by stories from our childhood, garden designers will transform the New Jersey Convention Center into a fairyland of full-scale landscapes and gardening delights! Explore A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Wizard of Oz, Fantasia and Mr. McGregor's Garden at the New Jersey Flower & Garden Show and let your imagination run wild!

Lush, full-scale landscapes will dazzle with colorful flowers, bubbling fountains, creative lighting, beautiful paving, and garden pavilions full of great ideas for outdoor living. Trees and shrubs in full bloom, stone hearths and gazebo hideaways beckon... just imagine the possibilities!

The Garden Club of New Jersey will present a Standard Flower Show, "A Child's Storybook" and a Youth Standard Flower Show, "Mother Goose." Both shows will include multiple classes of Designs, Horticulture and Artistic Crafts. Each show will also include a photography exhibit with photographs submitted by amateurs. Accredited out-of-state judges will judge the shows.

Seminars on each day will cover a wide range of gardening topics. Speakers scheduled to appear include Jon Carlofis, Ralph Snodsmith, Michael Colameco, Ann Raver, and Pegi Ballister-Howell. In addition, Rutgers Cooperative Extension will be hosting seminars on turf, orchids, invasives, deer and other wildlife in the garden, gardening for children, heirlooms in the garden, and many others.

Don’t miss out on this wonderful event. Please check the web site above for ticket sales, discount coupons, show hours, “Flowers after Hours” admission, and so much more!
TASK FORCE FORMED TO ADDRESS PRODUCE SAFETY ISSUES  
NJ Departments of Agriculture and Health Team with Industry and Researchers For Food Safety

(TRENTON) – The New Jersey Departments of Agriculture and Health and Senior Services announced the formation of a Produce Safety Task Force to protect New Jersey consumers and help local producers adapt to anticipated new produce-safety standards in the wake of several recent outbreaks of food-borne illnesses. The Task Force includes representation from the Departments of Agriculture and Health & Senior Services, produce and food industry leaders, and Rutgers University’s Food Policy Institute and Extension Service.

“New Jersey has been active on the food-safety front for many years, including third-party auditing and our Jersey Fresh quality standards,” said Secretary Kuperus. “Building on a history of safe produce, we cannot become complacent. Ensuring food safety for our consumers and helping our Garden State’s farmers to meet new food safety standards are not mutually exclusive. In fact, doing everything we can to make the standards attainable will ensure that our fresh, local produce remains the best option for consumers.”

“The Department of Health and Senior Services looks forward to working with our partners on this important task force,” said New Jersey Health and Senior Services Commissioner Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D. “We are always interested in exploring ways to improve food safety standards and continue to protect the health of New Jersey residents.”

Renewed concerns about E. coli bacteria in produce arose in late-September, when the Food and Drug Administration issued a nationwide advisory not to eat fresh spinach due to dozens of people being sickened by E. coli-tainted spinach, including several fatalities. The Department of Agriculture teamed with New Jersey spinach growers to assure consumers that the state’s spinach crop was safe. That effort helped to distinguish the state’s spinach from spinach coming from the three-county area in California.

The task force was formally approved by the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture at its meeting on Wednesday, December 13. “Preparation and prevention are the two keys to reducing incidences of food-borne illness,” Secretary Kuperus said. “By helping us to stay ahead of the curve, this Produce Safety Task Force will enable us to continue offering consumers fruits and vegetables that are not only delicious and nutritious, but also safe to eat.”

Fight Bac! Keeping Your Food Safe

New research reveals consumers are not aware of the prevalence of foodborne illness, potentially putting themselves at greater risk. Most adults surveyed do not know that each year they have a 25% chance of contracting a foodborne illness.

The Be Food Safe campaign was developed using the four core messages proven to reduce risk of foodborne illness: clean, separate, cook and chill.

* Clean: Wash hands, utensils and cutting boards before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.

* Separate: Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood apart from foods that won’t be cooked.

* Cook: Use a food thermometer – you can’t tell food is cooked safely by how it looks.

* Chill: Chill leftovers and takeout foods within two hours and keep the fridge at 40°F or below. Use an appliance thermometer.

For more information, please visit The Rutgers Extension Family and Community Health Sciences Department at www.rere.rutgers.edu/fchs/ and click on “Food Safety.” Be Food Safe and Fight BAC!® education materials are available at www.fightbac.org and http://www.fsis.usda.gov/.
Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Growers Convention:
“The Family Farm - Competing in the World Marketplace”

“The Family Farm - Competing in the World Marketplace” will be the theme of the 2007 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention. About 1,800 fruit and vegetable growers and other industry persons from all across the mid-Atlantic region and beyond will be gathering at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center in Hershey, PA, from Jan. 30 – Feb. 2, 2007.

The State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, the Maryland State Horticultural Society and the New Jersey State Horticultural Society have jointly sponsored this annual Convention.

The Convention has become one of the premier grower meetings in the Northeast. The Great American Hall at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center will host over 140 exhibitors. Specialized horticultural equipment, farm market merchandise, and packaging will all be on display along with information on the latest seed varieties, fruit varieties, pesticides and other supplies and services for the commercial grower. For more information on the different concurrent programs, please visit www.shaponline.org or http://gloucester.rrc.rutgers.edu or PA Vegetable Growers Assoc., www.pvga.org.

NEW JERSEY ANNUAL VEGETABLE MEETINGS

January 16, 17, 18, 2007 in conjunction with the

52nd Annual Meeting & Trade Show
Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey, Inc. and
The NJ Department of Agriculture

We’re heading back to the Taj Mahal! Newly renovated and with a trade show arena giving plenty of room and easy access for large equipment, coupled with the many amenities you can find on the Boardwalk, our move back to the Taj is designed to make our 2007 convention one of the best ever. The VGANJ Annual Meeting and Trade Show is an opportunity for vegetable growers and related businesses to come together to voice concerns, consider options, and learn how to stay on top of our game. It is also time to interact with friends, meet new people with new ideas, and remind ourselves that we are each part of something greater than ourselves.

“It is our hope that you will benefit by joining us in Atlantic City. The Board of Directors, Convention Committee and Rutgers Faculty always work hard to bring you a convention that is worthwhile and enjoyable with educational sessions that bend and stretch to meet the needs the industry as we face new challenges. I look forward to seeing you there. As a farmer, I know it will help me plan for the coming year. As your President, I hope to serve our industry to the best of my ability. Please contact me, or any of the VGANJ officers and directors, if we can be of service.”
- John R. Banscher, President, VGANJ.

For registration materials, visit www.njveggies.org or call 609-426-1690. Plan to attend! Rutgers Cooperative Extension programs are open to all!

Only 15 minutes from Atlantic City's International Airport, an hour from Philadelphia International Airport, The Taj Mahal is only minutes away from Amtrak, with convenient parking for over 7,000 vehicles nearby.

These plates are available at all DMV locations as well as through the mail. They are only $20 and there is no additional charge for obtaining the plates at any time other than at the time of registration renewal. For more information go to www.state.nj.us/mvs/ and click on "Special Interest". Scroll down to see the Ag Promotion License Plate.
MID-ATLANTIC PUMPKIN SCHOOL
Thursday, January 25, 2007 9:00 AM

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County
2 Academy Drive, Westampton, NJ
609-265-5050 / 856-307-6450, ext. 1

Fall Agritourism Marketing Opportunities
Bill Hlubik, Ag Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Middlesex County

Pumpkin Grown with Leaf Mulch Produces Large Attractive Fruit and Builds Soil Quality
Joseph Heckman, Soil Fertility Specialist, Rutgers University

Update on Disease Control in Pumpkin
Dr. Andy Wyenandt, Vegetable Pathologist, NJAES Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Pumpkin Variety Trial Results from Pennsylvania
Timothy Elkner, Ag Agent, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Lancaster County

Weed Control for Pumpkins
Bradley Majek, Specialist in Weed Science, NJAES Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Low Cost Pumpkin Disease Control
Win Cowgill, Ag Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Hunterdon County

Ethnic Cucurbits and Gourds
Rick VanVranken, Ag Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Atlantic County

Insect Control for Pumpkins
Jerry Ghidiu, Vegetable Entomologist, NJAES Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Pollination and Fruit Set in Pumpkin
Ray Samulis, Ag Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County

Update on No-Till Pumpkins
Michelle Casella, Ag Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Gloucester County

Refreshments, lunch, and educational handouts will be provided with registration for the meeting. Pumpkin Production Guides available at meeting. Please order ahead on your registration form.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE
FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2007

Name:________________
Address:______________
Phone:________________
Fax:__________________
E-mail:________________

Additional Names of Persons Attending:
1.____________________
2.____________________

Total Number of Persons = ______ X $50.00 each

Pumpkin Production Guide = ______ X $45.00 each

Total enclosed = ______

Make checks payable to: GCBA and Mail to:
Pumpkin School
c/o M. Casella, Rutgers Cooperative Ext., 1200 N. Delsea Drive, Clayton, NJ 08312