

The Stalk



Accomack & Northampton County Cooperative Extension
Eastern Shore Agricultural Research & Extension Center



Accomack and Northampton Cooperative Extension bring agriculture to Eastern Shore third graders through annual Farm Tours

The Accomack and Northampton Farm Tours offer an engaging and educational experience for third graders on Virginia's Eastern Shore, introducing them to the vital world of agriculture. As the two largest agricultural counties in Virginia, Accomack and Northampton provide an ideal setting for children to learn about farming practices, crop production, and the importance of agriculture in their community.



This interactive event aligns with the Virginia Standards of Learning, ensuring that students gain valuable knowledge that complements their classroom education. This year, new exhibits such as the Eastern Shore Beekeeping Guild captivated the students, while the crop duster and drone demonstrations were particularly popular, showcasing modern agricultural technology in action. These hands-on experiences not only educate but also inspire the next generation to appreciate and potentially pursue careers in agriculture.

Accomack and Northampton County Extension Offices would like to thank the Accomack and Northampton Farm Bureau offices for their continued support of these events



FARM TOUR 2024



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New VCE ANR Agent onboarding on the Eastern Shore

Dr. Mark Reiter, ESAREC Director & Soils & Nutrient Management Extension Specialist

New Agriculture and Natural Resources extension agents from throughout Virginia are taking part in a new onboarding program allowing them to gain exposure and understanding of all facets of agriculture in the Commonwealth. This includes visiting each Virginia Tech Agriculture Research and Extension Center to understand their focus, visit with the specialists and researchers and create collaborative opportunities. In October, 18 new ANR agents travelled to the Hampton Roads AREC, the Eastern Shore AREC and the Seafood AREC to discuss horticulture, vegetable production and seafood production topics.

Extension agents toured the Eastern Shore AREC plant pathology diagnostic lab with Dr. Doug Higgins and Calyn Adams, plasticulture raised fresh market tomatoes, and snap bean disease management plots. Agents also experienced cover crops being seeded by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with Dr. Vijay Singh, RC Cooley and graduate students, and participated in a rainfall simulation on identical soils with different cover crop treatments over time with Drs. Mark Reiter and Joey Haymaker and John Mason. We look forward to working with our new ANR Extension agents from across the Commonwealth to increase agricultural production and economic viability!



Doppelgangers Dr. Doug Higgins and Nathan Sedghi



Agents got their hands dirty harvesting the last of the tomatoes



Dr. V. Singh and his team teach and demonstrate UAV usage in Ag

Scenes from the ANR Agent Onboarding at the ESAREC



Rainfall simulation by Dr. Joey Haymaker



\$12.5 million grant writing efforts to address pressing challenges is our researchers' focus for the fall

As we enter this pivotal time of year, faculty researchers at the Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC) are diligently finalizing data and reports while simultaneously advancing their research initiatives and pursuing grant opportunities. Grant writing is particularly active, with a significant focus on targeting \$3 million for plant pathology projects. These efforts aim to address critical issues such as downy mildew and Phytophthora in cucurbits, bacterial wilt in tomatoes, Fusarium wilt in watermelon, Fusarium head blight in wheat, and Alternaria in broccoli.

Additionally, the weed science team is submitting three NIFA (USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture) grants totaling \$2 million in fall 2024, which will explore various chemical and non-chemical weed management strategies. The Soils and Nutrient Management Program, we are working with project leader, Dr. Bo Zhang in the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences and the Edamame Advancement Team (EAT), to further Edamame research in 4-states with a Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) proposal that will be valued at \$7.5 million. This is through the USDA-NIFA SCRI program.

This concerted effort underscores our commitment to enhancing agricultural practices and addressing pressing challenges in the field.



Herbicide options and strategies to terminate cover crops in the spring



“Cover crop planting is almost over, and growers might look for herbicide options and strategies to terminate cover crops in spring for no-till corn and soybean production systems. Cover crops have the potential to reduce weed emergence by 90% and found to decrease the survival success of herbicide-resistant weed populations. However, weed suppression benefits mainly depend on cover crop species used, termination timing and biomass production. The biomass accumulation by cover crops increases if it stays long in the field. Longer the duration of cover crops in the field, greater will be biomass production and other associated benefits. Therefore, to take advantage of cover crops in summers, it is recommended to plant cover crops early in Fall and terminate late, or planting green. Weed Scientists in the Mid-Atlantic region have summarized cover crop management practices under different scenarios including tank mixes, herbicide efficacy, and impact of roller crimping.

Please refer to the latest factsheet authored by Dr. John Wallace (Penn State), and co-authored by several others including Dr. Singh (Virginia Tech – Eastern Shore AREC)”

You may find the cover crop termination and herbicide selection guide at the following link:
<https://growiwm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Combined-Cover-Crop-Termination-Factsheet-Series.pdf>



2024 VCE On-Farm Soybean Variety Trial

Northampton and Accomack Extension Agents are pleased to announce the successful harvest of our Enlist E3 soybean variety trial, featuring 18 different varieties from groups 4 and 5.

The objective of these trials is to identify optimal soybean varieties for increased yield and quality in local conditions. This provides critical insights for producers, particularly in Virginia's two largest soybean-growing counties, enabling better decision-making and risk mitigation.

On-farm trials benefit producers in many ways:

1. **Enhanced Yield**: Identifying top-performing varieties tailored to local climates.
2. **Improved Quality**: Selection of superior genetics for market advantage.
3. **Risk Reduction**: Genetic diversity in crops helps safeguard against environmental and pest-related challenges.

Thank you to Atkinson Farms, Will Atkinson and his crew, Richie Custis and Robert Bundick, whose hard work and commitment make this trial a cornerstone of agricultural advancement.

Thank you to the Eastern Shore AREC for providing logistical assistance with the use of the weigh wagon and truck!

Stay tuned for the results >

2023 on-farm soybean variety trials' results are available [online](#)

Agents' Calendar: "Working for the Wellbeing of Our Communities!" NOVEMBER 2024

- Nov 1: Eastern Shore Soybean Variety Trial Harvest
- Nov 4: VCE / ESAREC Monthly Meeting
- Nov 6-7: ANR IPM Conference, Roanoke, VA
- Nov 12-13: VAAEA Annual Meeting, Gloucester, VA
- Nov 13-15: Mid-Atlantic Farmers Market Conference, Richmond, VA
- Nov 14: Emergency Preparedness Webinar
- Nov 15: Monthly Soybean Agronomist (Carrie Ortel) Zoom Meeting
- Nov 18-20: Professional Development Institute, Charlottesville
- Nov 24: Eastern Shore Ag Conference Planning Committee Meeting
- Nov 25-27: Thanksgiving Holiday

Ongoing:

- 2025 Eastern Shore producers sustainability series
- 2025 Gardening series
- 2025 Ag Conference and Trade Show Planning
- 2025 Small Farm Workshop Planning
- 2025 Accomack/Northampton VCE Program Planning
- Regional Shared-use kitchen Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Study
- Research grants contribution for slug management

Weekly

- WESR VCE AG Radio recordings - daily @ 8:30 am & 12:30 pm
- WESR Master Gardener Radio recordings - daily @ 12:20 pm



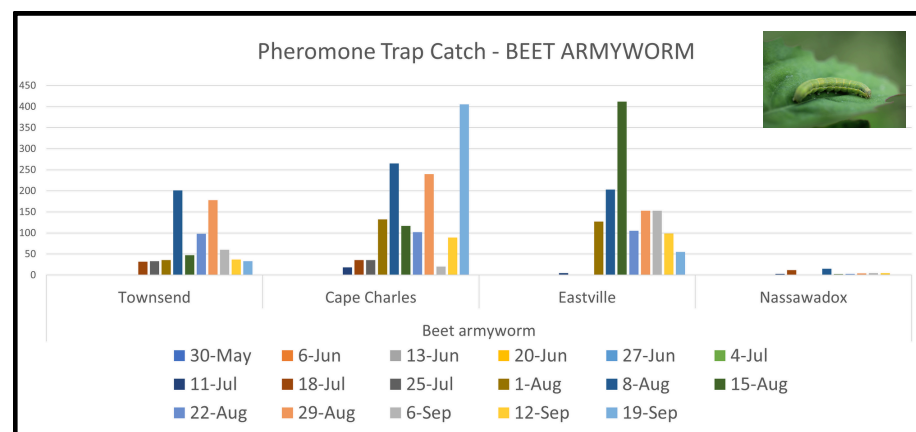
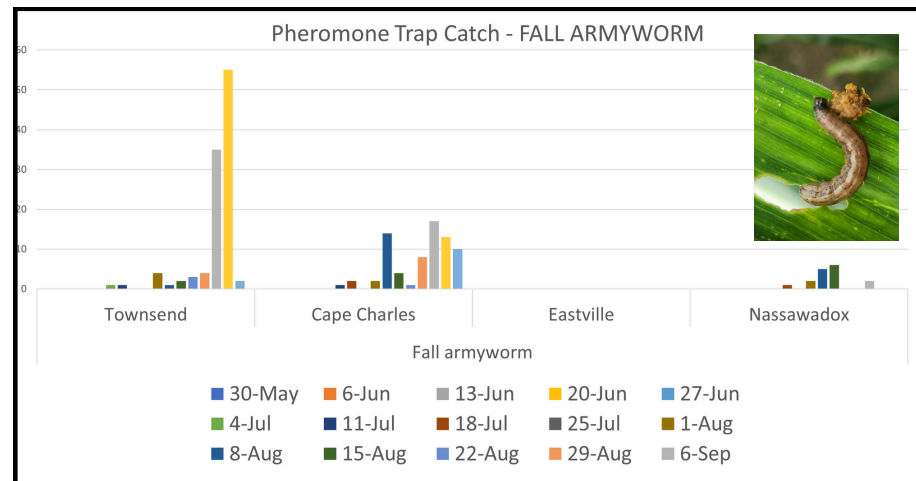
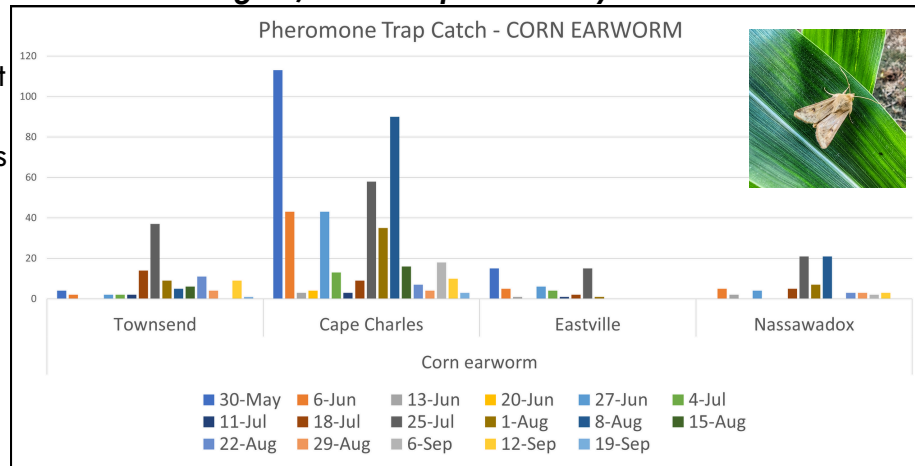


Pheromone Trap Insect Monitoring - 2024 Recap

Hélène Doughty, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, Northampton County

VCE pheromone trap catch monitoring program was initiated on May 23 and ended on October 1st 2024. Insects monitored were corn earworm, fall armyworm and beet armyworm. Corn earworm has many hosts such as soybeans, corn, cotton, tomatoes, and snap beans while fall armyworm mostly infests sweet corn, sorghum and turf in our region. The beet armyworm is another migratory moth that is of economic significance to soybeans, tomatoes, and snap beans, among others.

Traps were deployed in 4 areas through county and checked weekly for moth counts.



What should we glean from the information from this year's monitoring program?

- Corn earworm counts were overall on average for 2024 with the majority of the flight taking place in late July through August. Double crop soybeans are usually most vulnerable but sweep net samples indicated that larvae numbers were overall under threshold.
- Fall armyworm counts were much higher in 2024 than the past few years in the most Southern areas of the Eastern Shore. The timing of early September would have mostly affected cotton as they are known to feed on bolls although the damage is not as severe as with the corn earworm.
- Beet armyworm counts were fairly high in 2024. Despite high counts, infestation in soybeans remained low with tomato production and likely cotton being most impacted. The population did not appear in large numbers until July, therefore bypassing the worst of the drought in June. Drought conditions tend to make beet armyworm infestations much more severe.

In cotton, drought conditions will lead to increased egg laying and therefore a potential for higher damage to flowers and squares. Scouting on a consistent basis and taking thresholds into consideration is your best management strategy to reduce the economic impact of those pests as well as saving on unnecessary costly insecticide applications. Contact your extension agent for more information on thresholds. Thank you to the Northampton Farm Bureau for their support of the insect monitoring program.



Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference & Trade Show update

Planning for the Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference and Trade Show continues with the Association of Eastern Virginia Agricultural Producers, Inc. A distinctive theme is being established around the notion of sustainability and economic viability in light of the difficult market conditions for many of our row crops. Aside from the typical sessions (Soybean, Potato, Vegetable, Agronomy), the committee is adding a session focused on agricultural financial sustainability. The conference will take place at the Exmore Moose Lodge on January 29th and 30th, 2025.

SAVE THE DATE

EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

Wednesday January 29, 2025
Thursday, January 30, 2025

AGENT QUESTION OF THE MONTH

"My blueberry bushes were infested with indian wax scales and did not produce as much. What should I do?"

Insect infestation are oftentimes a secondary issue due to a decline in health of the plant. In this case, the bushes were several years old and had crowded and crossing canes. Aside from suggesting to check soil fertility (it is recommended to check every 3 years) for adequate nutrition and pH (optimum is 4.2 to 5.2 for blueberries), the recommendation was to prune and thin the canes. 10 to 15 canes per bush is best. For more information on small fruit, refer to the VCE publication at <https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-840/426-840.html>



Figure 1. Left: unpruned blueberry plant. Right: after pruning, a mature blueberry bush should have 10 to 15 canes.

WHAT'S THAT BUG?

Hélène Doughty, Northampton ANR agent, invites you to test your entomology knowledge.



Take a guess on the pest and email or text your answer to 757-999-0780 / hdoughty@vt.edu

September Answer: Squash Vine Borer

- The previous "What's That Bug" was a squash vine borer (*Melittia cucurbitae*).
- It is a significant pest for squash, pumpkin, and gourd plants. The larvae bore into the stems, causing the plants to wilt and eventually die if left untreated. Signs of infestation include wilting leaves and sawdust-like frass near the base of the plant. Control methods include crop rotation, using row covers to prevent egg-laying, and manually removing larvae from stems.
- The conspicuous red and black moth flies during the day and usually appears in June.



Mid-Atlantic Crop School

Obtain your continuing education units

We have an exciting and educational lineup for this year's Mid-Atlantic Crop School! This is a great chance to network with other Certified Crop Advisers (CCA) in the Mid-Atlantic, mingle with Land Grant University scientists, and earn all your continuing education credits in one place.

Registration is officially open. Please go ahead and register today to secure your spot and share this information with others that may benefit. The permalink for Crop School info is <https://bit.ly/MidAtlanticCropSchool>. All event details, link to the program booklet with titles and abstracts, and link to Eventbrite registration is on the website.

To register, please navigate to: <http://go.umd.edu/24crop>. This event is organized by the University of Maryland and University of Delaware, with nutrient management committee support from Dr. Mark Reiter at the Eastern Shore AREC and many speakers from Virginia Tech. See you in Ocean City, Maryland in November!

NOV **19-21** 2024

PRINCESS ROYALE | OCEAN CITY, MD

Crop School Reception hosted by Mid-Atlantic
CCA Wednesday Night, be sure to RSVP

Early Bird Deadline: 10/25 <http://go.umd.edu/24crop>
Last Day to Register: 11/8

**The Eastern Shore AREC and
both Extension Offices will be
Closed on the following days**

Wed, 11/27 (noon) - Fri, 11/29

**Wishing you a day filled with joy
and gratitude**

Thanks
giving

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VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
 VIRGINIA TECH.

Virginia Cooperative Extension brings the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth. VCE provides education through programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development and Community Viability.

The Virginia Tech, Eastern Shore AREC is committed to supporting commercial vegetable, grain, oilseed, and fiber production throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Centrally located on Virginia's Eastern Shore, the center conducts basic and applied research on more than 25 agricultural crops.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in any activity, please contact Rachel Barnes at 757-787-1361* (*TDD number is (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss accommodations.