

Welcome to ON Organic

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAFRA



Happy new year from ON Organic!

We hope you enjoy this month's edition of ON Organic and we look forward to seeing you at the Guelph Organic Conference taking place from January 29-February 1. Stop by the OMAFRA booth and learn more about beneficial insects/natural enemies and new livestock enrichment toys at our interactive display. Also be sure to take in the "Managing and enhancing soil fertility from soil test to application" workshop at the conference moderated by Anne Verhallen, OMAFRA Horticulture Soil Management Specialist on Saturday, January 31 from 1:30-3pm.

We want to hear from you! Are there livestock, crop or business management issues you are facing or would like to learn more about? Please let us know so we can address it for you (and others) in an upcoming newsletter!

Thank you once again to our contributing authors and to EFAO, OCO and others who pass along our newsletter on a regular basis.

Subscription to this newsletter is easy and no cost. For details go to the webpage:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/subscribe/indx.html#organic>

The newsletter is also posted on the OMAFRA website at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/news/news-organic.html>

The French version of these newsletters is available at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/french/crops/organic/news/news-organic.html>

The OMAFRA Organic pages are linked from:

<http://www.ontario.ca/organic> and <http://www.ontario.ca/biologique>

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Cyclamen Mite Management in Organic Strawberries

Pam Fisher, Berry Crop Specialist, OMAFRA

Cyclamen mites (*Phytonemus pallidus*) thrive in humid locations and are a common greenhouse pest. They are also serious pests of both conventional and organic strawberries, especially in perennial matted row systems.

The first step in managing cyclamen mites is accurate and early diagnosis of the symptoms they cause on plants. Cyclamen mite feeding causes wrinkled, distorted leaves, slightly darker in colour than uninfested leaves (Figure 1). When populations are low, leaves grow to nearly full size, but may be crinkled or roughened. Leaves heavily infested with cyclamen mites become severely stunted and crinkled, resulting in a compact toughened leaves in the center of the plant (Figure 2, Figure 3). Fruit on infested plants is small, bronzed, with prominent seeds. When uncontrolled, this mite can prevent new growth and severely affect fruit quality.

to be stunted and slow to grow in spring. Symptoms are also somewhat similar to those caused by virus disease or calcium deficiency.

To confirm the diagnosis of cyclamen mite injury, it is important to see the mites. Cyclamen mites are tiny (< 0.3 mm) oval mites, white to amber in colour and best viewed with 10- 40x magnification (Figure 4). Eggs are oval, translucent and comparatively large, about half the size of an adult mite. Masses of eggs in crevices of leaves look like piles of salt (Figure 5). At low population densities, they are found mainly along the midrib of folded leaves and under the calyx of the fruit. At higher population densities, they can be in any protected part of the plant. This mite prefers high humidity. When the leaflet unfolds, changes in temperature and humidity cause the mites to migrate down the petiole to new leaflets.



Figure 1: Wrinkled and distorted leaves of strawberry caused by cyclamen mites.



Figure 4: Cyclamen mite (white to amber in colour) and egg viewed under magnification.



Figure 2 and 3: Stunted and crinkled leaves of strawberry resulting from a severe infestation of cyclamen mites.

This problem is easy to confuse with other problems. Both cyclamen mite and winter injury can cause plants

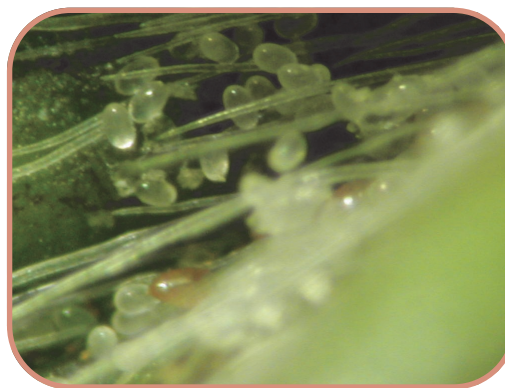


Figure 5: Cyclamen mite eggs are oval, translucent and approximately half the size of adult mites.

Cyclamen Mite Management in Organic Strawberries (Cont'd)

Mites can be introduced to new fields on infested planting stock. Infestations may first appear in scattered locations. As populations build up, mites move to new plants along the runners. The mites also may be transferred from plant to plant by routine cultural practices, by drafts of air, by close proximity of plants, or on clothes or hands. Female cyclamen mites produce hundreds of eggs; one mite can soon produce a mite colony large enough to cause damage and spread to surrounding plants. Older fields are more likely to have higher populations of cyclamen mite. There are multiple generations each year but populations peak in early spring (bud- green fruit stage) and again in late summer (late August- September).

Managing cyclamen mites requires careful sanitation and specific production practices.

- Start new fields with clean plants. Purchase healthy plants grown in an accredited program.
- Avoid planting new fields adjacent to older ones.
- Avoid working in infested fields and then moving to

newer or uninfested plantings. Instead, schedule work so activities are done in newer, clean fields first.

- Scout fields regularly and carefully rogue out plant with symptoms.
- Maintain short strawberry cropping cycles, harvesting the field for no more than 2 years.
- Naturally occurring beneficial mites and thrips will feed on cyclamen mites.
- Introduction of predatory mites, in high numbers, may help keep cyclamen mites in check, but this strategy is experimental. Check with suppliers about the best species of predatory mite to use. Combinations of *Neoseiulus fallacis* and *Neoseiulus californicus* have been suggested.

For more information on cyclamen mites, see OMAFRA's crop IPM modules at www.Ontario.ca/cropipm

Resources

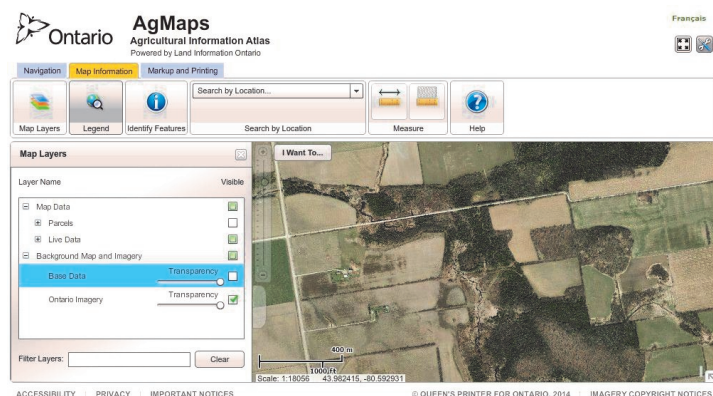
NEW! AgMaps Portal and Agricultural Information Atlas Application Help Tutorial Series

Just launched!

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has a new series of tutorials to help you use the Agricultural Information Atlas (AIA), an online application that allows you to create custom maps and find agricultural information for Ontario. You can find the AIA link on the AgMaps Geographic Information Portal at ontario.ca/agmaps, the ministry's single access point for geospatial data.

The AgMaps Portal and AIA Application Help Tutorial Series provides step-by-step instructions on how to use the AIA for your farm or business. The audio/visual series helps with a range of topics – from navigating the application and creating layers on your custom maps, to creating tile drainage maps and nutrient management strategy farm sketches.

Find the 13 tutorials on the [OMAFRA website](http://www.ontario.ca/agmaps).

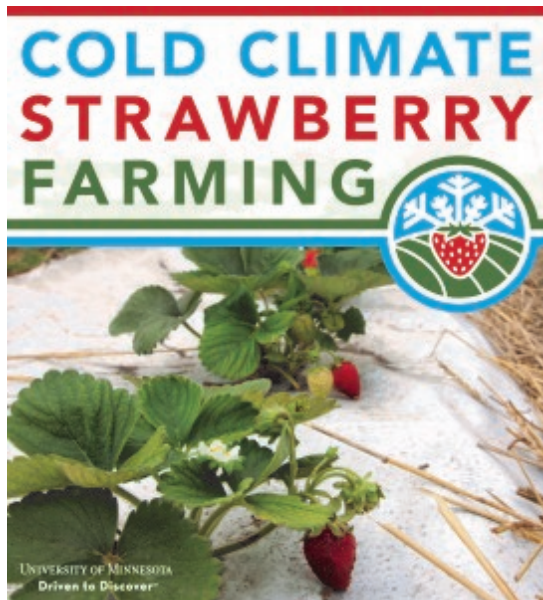


For more information, contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1.877.424.1300 or ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca.

Cold Climate Strawberry Farming Now Available for FREE on Inkling.com

AUGUST 12, 2014 BY ECHO MARTIN

Now, breaking into commercial strawberry farming will be easier than ever with the help of this **free** interactive e-book from the University of Minnesota, *Cold Climate Strawberry Farming*.



[Click here to download for free on Inkling.com](#)

The e-book goes into detail on important topics such as choosing your market, innovative marketing techniques, comprehensive cultivar recommendations, insurance requirements and other essential business info, and of course best practices for growing strawberries. For those already experienced with commercial strawberries, *Cold Climate Strawberry Farming* introduces a new, season-extending method of growing strawberries for cold climates using low tunnels and day-neutral cultivars. All content is based on years of research at the University of Minnesota and Minnesota Grown, and can be viewed online or downloaded for offline use to any iOS or Android mobile device. Now you can easily bring the information you need right to where you need it.

This project is funded by a grant from the Walmart Foundation and administered by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability. It was created by the Department of Horticultural Science at the University of Minnesota and is copyrighted under a Creative Commons License: [BY-NC-ND 4.0](#)



Looking for Information on Cover Crops?

Cover crops have a lot of places where they can fit in horticultural crop rotations. Before late planted crops like pumpkins to provide weed suppression. After early harvested crops like peas or snap beans to cover and protect the soil while enhancing soil structure. After winter wheat to suppress resistant weeds in the rotation or as a part of the overall crop rotation to suppress nematodes in preparation for planting strawberries.

Looking for more details on how a cover crop can fit, herbicide concerns or the basics on a particular cover crop species? There is an improved version of the Purdue Midwest Cover Crop Field Guide available now. The pocket guide, released Monday (Sept. 22), is produced by Purdue University and the Midwest Cover Crops Council. The first cover crops guide was released in February 2012. The updated guide is in response to the increasing interest in cover crops in the Midwest and to requests for additional information.

"All this new information will help farmers better choose appropriate cover crops for their situation and better manage the cover crops they grow - all for greater potential benefit for their soils and cash crop growth," said Eileen Kladivko, Purdue professor of agronomy.

The updated guide features seven new topics:

- Getting started in cover crops.
- Rationale for fitting cover crops into different cropping systems.
- Suggested cover crops for common rotations.
- Cover crop effects on cash crop yields.
- Climate considerations including winter hardiness and water use.
- Adapting seeding rates and spring management based on weather.
- "Up and coming" cover crops.

There also is more information about herbicide carryover, manure and biosolids applications, and crop insurance issues (note: US crop insurance issues). There has been a significant contribution from Ontario research to the new material, particularly in the area of herbicide carryover (Dr. Darren Robinson, University of Guelph- Ridgetown campus)

The guide's second edition is available at Purdue

Extension's The Education Store at www.the-education-store.com. Search by the name of the publication or product code ID-433.

A link to a video clip of Purdue University agronomy professor Eileen Kladvko explaining the benefits of cover crops is available at <http://youtu.be/2NIyQeZ8jxQ>

Learning Opportunities



Exploring Value Added Opportunities Course

Ever wondered about turning your fruit into jam? Ever dreamed about making gourmet ready-to-eat meals with your produce?



Take the free OMAFRA course, Exploring Value Added Opportunities, to learn whether adding value to your products and services is right for your business.



Course Description

Participants will learn how to generate ideas for value-added opportunities, assess an idea's business potential, identify and manage risk and develop a plan to execute their idea.

Course Dates and Times

The course is being delivered through three, one-hour interactive webinars. These sessions are taking place on February 24, March 3, and March 10 (all Tuesdays) from 12-1pm. To participate in this free learning opportunity, you will need Internet and phone access. Pre-registration is also required.

Meet & Greet at the Guelph Organic Conference

If you'd like to learn more about the *Exploring Value Added Opportunities* training in person, join us for a Meet

& Greet at the Guelph Organic Conference on Sunday, February 1 from 12:30 to 1:30pm. Register by January 28 at ontario.ca/e996 to receive a complimentary light meal.

Course Testimonial

"Sessions were dynamic and engaging. We were also very impressed with the sheer quantity of good information offered to us. Thank you!" A past course participant.

Learn more at: ontario.ca/e996 or 1-877-424-1300

Register at: ontario.ca/by3z or 1-877-424-1300

Nutrient Management eLearning Courses

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has online nutrient management courses!

Our training courses give learners the tools to safely manage nutrients while protecting the environment. Take our courses to become a government-certified Nutrient Management Planner or Consultant.

Our eLearning format allows you to learn on your own time and at your own pace. The newest eLearning course – Introduction to Nutrient Management – provides a basic understanding of nutrient management best management practices. This course will be of interest to a wider audience beyond those who require certification.

Visit the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus website for more information on in-class and online nutrient management training options.

Contact the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus for more information:

Toll Free: 1.855.648.1444

Email: mmcdonal@uoguelph.ca

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention (OFVC)

This year a number of sessions at the OFVC will focus on information pertinent to organic and ecological production. Here are a few synopses:

Organic Weed Management Program:

This year, the organic session at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention will take place on Wednesday morning, February 18th, and focus on different methods and strategies to control weeds organically. It is very labour intensive to control weeds without herbicides and if not controlled, they can attribute to a major yield loss. **Maryse Leblanc** from the Institute of Research and Development in Agro-environment in Quebec, who has done many years of research on optimizing physical and cultural control weed management, will be speaking on **mechanical weed management**. **Caroline Halde** from Cornell University will be speaking on past research done **using mulches and cover crops to manage weeds** and reducing tillage in organic farming systems. **Kristen Obeid**, the OMAFRA Weed Management Program Lead for Horticulture Crops, will be speaking on **taking advantages of weed weaknesses** where she will be speaking on strategies to best control weeds in terms of timing and weed seed bank management. **Fabian Menalled** from Montana State University will be coming to talk on his experiences with **using sheep to manage weeds and cover crops in horticultural systems**. Fabian Menalled will also be speaking about the **eOrganic** group who has a goal to foster a research and outreach community and to engage farmers and ag professionals through online training and publications. This organic weed control session is sure to cover many effective weed management techniques that can reduce labour and be used in organic systems.

Berry Program: Low Tunnels for Strawberries?

Low tunnels, or “caterpillar tunnels” are a new trend for strawberry crops around the world (Figure 1). Low tunnels are basically sheets of plastic laid over support hoops. They are constructed over strawberries grown on raised plastic-mulched beds. The plastic is secured over the support hoops with cords or wires, so that the plastic is easily pushed up or down to open or close the tunnels. Unlike high tunnels, which are designed to accommodate humans and equipment, the low tunnels

are only about 30 inches tall.

Are low tunnels an option for Ontario growers? There are many potential advantages. They are less costly than other forms of protected culture of strawberries, compared to high tunnels or greenhouse production. Weather-related problems, such as damage from wind, hail and rain splash are prevented. Diseases, especially anthracnose and botrytis grey mould, are reduced, in a low tunnel environment. However, input costs are significant, with additional investment needed for hoops and plastic. Labour costs include cost of installation, as well the cost of routine, sometimes daily venting to prevent heat build-up.

At OFVC 2014 Dr. Kim Lewers reported on her research using low tunnels for strawberries in Beltsville, Maryland. She was encouraged by the extended season, disease control, and ease of frost protection provided by this system. She felt the spectrum of light transmitted through the plastic was an important factor affecting disease control and fruit quality.

At OFVC 2015, the berry program Wed Feb 18 features another presentation about low tunnels. This year’s speaker is OBGA member and grower Graham Shaw, of Taylor Berry Farms in Muskoka. What better way is there to learn about low tunnels than from a grower who has taken this system to the farm and made it work.

Are low tunnels for you? Find out at OFVC 2015.

SWD Program: What Ontario Growers Need to Know about Spotted Wing Drosophila

Spotted wing drosophila (SWD) is taking the world by storm. In less than 5 years, this pest has invaded fruit-growing regions across North America and much of Europe. An incredible research effort is on-going to learn about the life cycle and biology of this pest, how to recognize the damage, and how to control it sustainably. The **Spotted Wing Drosophila** program on Thursday Feb 19 will bring the latest research from the northeast, as well as practical advice for those who are dealing with this pest. This program is for growers, their scouts, consultants and industry suppliers in Ontario.

How to identify the pest and its damage. Anna

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention (OFVC) (Cont'd)

Wallingford, from Cornell University will share her insights.

How to monitor for SWD? What traps and baits are the best? How to assess damage before its too late? Pam Fisher and the OMAFRA SWD team have been monitoring for SWD since 2011. Pam will share what has been learned so far in Ontario. Trapping for adults is time consuming, expensive, and not practical for individual farms. Monitoring for SWD in fruit using salt water floatation is a better way to assess risk to your crop and pick up early infestations.

What practical research results can I apply on my farm? Dr. Greg Loeb will discuss important research findings from the northeastern SWD research team. Learn how biology of this pest, wild hosts and your production practices can affect management of SWD.

Insecticides are an important tool for SWD control. When SWD adults are present in a region, insecticides are required throughout the ripening and harvest period for most berry crops. Learn from guest speaker Mark Longstroth, Michigan State University, how to choose an insecticide, and how long you can expect it to work.

Spotted wing drosophila is a manageable pest. Growers have had to change their production practices and re-think their pest management programs, however, SWD can be controlled. Our program ends with advice from a large berry grower on how to control SWD in pick-your-own and local farm business. A question and answer period will follow.

Don't miss the SWD program Thursday morning, Feb 19, at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference.

Internships and Call for Proposals

Ecological Farming Internship Opportunities

Organization: C.R.A.F.T. South-West Ontario
(www.craftsouthwestontario.ca)

Location: Southwestern Ontario

Type: Full-time seasonal - for more details see the farm descriptions on the C.R.A.F.T. website.

If you're ready for a full, hands-on experience that will immerse you in ecological farming then you've come to the right place. C.R.A.F.T. Ontario is your gateway to a farming internship experience that will change your life. Whether your dream is to have your own organic farm one day or you just want to learn some food-growing and hands-on skills that can be applied in other parts of your life, a farming internship is a powerful experience that will equip you with the tools and insights to make a real difference in the world.

Each C.R.A.F.T. farm operates independently and offers its own internship with individualized agreements around such things as living and eating arrangements, stipends, work hours, and training methods.

What is C.R.A.F.T. Ontario?

C.R.A.F.T. (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) is a collaboration of organic and biodynamic farms whose aim is to provide opportunities for interns to learn more about sustainable small-scale agricultural production. The C.R.A.F.T. program offers on-farm training to the interns of all regional C.R.A.F.T. farms. Monthly C.R.A.F.T. field days include a potluck lunch, a group activity, a workshop, and a field tour.

For more information, visit:

www.craftsouthwestontario.ca

To apply, please contact individual farms directly.

For more details see the farm descriptions on the website and contact individual farms directly to apply or ask further questions.

Ignatius Farmland Request for Proposals, 2015

Ignatius Farm is seeking entrepreneurs to locate their ecological agricultural enterprises on several fields of newly available farmland for rent. The organic farm is part of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre of Guelph. For full details, see the Ignatius Farmland Request for Proposals – winter 2015.

Internships and Call for Proposals (Cont'd)

We are especially interested in:

- Seed-saving enterprises, both vegetables and field crops
- Organic or ecological small fruit and berry production, marketed in part to Ignatius Farm CSA membership and Community Gardeners (organic certification optional; following the Canadian Organic Standard is required)
- Other organic/ecological crops and livestock products that can be marketed in part to existing Ignatius Farm clientele
- Organic production of particular crops (e.g. snap peas, beans, berries, asparagus...) for Ignatius Farm CSA by sub-contract (non-exclusive)
- Forest gardening/permaculture/alley cropping – diverse annual and perennial cropping

- Research programs involving any of the above forms of production
- Education and outreach programs involving any of the above forms of production
- Collaborative proposals combining production, research, and/or education & outreach

Proposals are to be submitted by February 9, 2015 to farmmanager@ignatiusguelph.ca.

Ignatius Farm is also receiving applications for our established farm internship program in the Principles & Practices of Organic Agriculture, as well as several farm contract positions. Job applications are due Feb 2, 2015.

Conferences, Meetings and Tours

Sustainable Foods Summit

Date: January 21-22, 2015

Location: Hilton San Francisco, San Francisco, USA

For more information please visit the website at: www.sustainablefoodssummit.com

Organic by Design

34th Annual Guelph Organic Conference

Date: January 29-February 1, 2015

Location: University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario

For more information please visit the website at: www.guelphorganicconf.ca/



The Society for Biodynamic Farming and Gardening in Ontario's

5th Annual Wine and Cheese Social

Date: Saturday, January 31st, 2015; Time: 5-8pm

Location: Best Western Brock Hotel, Pine Tree "A" Room, 716 Gordon Street (corner of Stone Rd E. and Gordon St.), Guelph, Ontario

Admission: \$20.00 for members and \$30.00 for non-members. Includes samplings from biodynamic wineries, and a smorgasbord of biodynamic and organic product nibbles.

Tickets are available at the door, the Society booth at the Guelph Organic Conference, or in advance by sending cheques made payable to The Society for Biodynamic Farming and Gardening in Ontario: The BD Society, 14 Simcoe Blvd, Simcoe, Ontario N3Y 3L5. **For further information:** contact Laurie McGregor, Treasurer, at 519.426.

9021 or e-mail at lmcgregor@sympatico.ca.

3rd Annual Kawartha Farm Stewardship Workshop

Date: Saturday February 7, 2015; 9:00am-4:00pm

Location: Rolling Hills Public School, 694 Highway 7a, Bethany, ON (20 minutes west of Peterborough, corner of 35 & 7a).

Conferences, Meetings and Tours (Cont'd)

Brought to you by the partners in the Kawartha Farm Stewardship Collaborative, this full day workshop will feature presentations by farmers and stewardship professionals on topics including:

- Innovative tile and land drainage solutions that include wetlands
- Interesting alternative watering solutions for livestock
- Greg Stewart from OMAFRA will explain where and when neonicotinoid pesticides are economically valuable and realistic options for reducing neonicotinoid use
- Further details available soon!

Early bird deadline: Register by January 19 to receive a complimentary satellite map of your farm property (1 per registration).

For more information visit: www.kawarthafarmstewardship.org, or contact Holly Shipclark: 705.328.2271 x 240

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention (OFVC)

Date: February 18-19, 2015

Location: Scotiabank Convention Centre, 6815 Stanley Ave, Niagara Falls, Ontario

More information: For more information, please visit the website at www.ofvc.ca

Getting to the Roots: Successful Organic Farming Eco Farm Day, 2015

Date: Saturday, February 28, 2015

Location: Ramada Inn, Cornwall, Ontario

Presented by the Canadian Organic Growers Ottawa-St Lawrence-Outaouais Chapter (COG-OSO) in partnership with Organic Meadow and the Bauta Initiative on Seed Security

Keynote address: *Healthy Land, Healthy People, Healthy Profits: Using Holistic Management for Sustainable Agriculture*, delivered by Tony McQuail, educator with the Holistic Management Institute and farmer since 1973 at Meeting Place Organic Farm in southern Ontario

Featuring a dynamic range of workshops on topics related to Livestock Production, Field Crops, Market Growers, and much more:

- scaling up the market farm - increasing profits and sustainability
- organic certification - proposed alternative models for

- small-scale farmers
- crop rotations, cover crops and weed management in organic field crops
- organic pasture management optimizing animal health AND farm profits
- root cellars - extending the fruit/vegetable market season
- organic pastured pork - adding breeding stock to your organic farm
- open pollinated corn - growing and adapting varieties for organic farms
- organic vineyard production in the Outaouais
- growing and marketing organic medicinal herbs in the Outaouais region
- value added products from goat and sheep milk
- organic beehive management techniques

Registration includes a trade show with over 50 booths and a buffet lunch featuring local organic farm products. There is simultaneous translation into French of the keynote presentation and three workshops.

More information and updates at:

Internet: ecofarmday.ca

Facebook: facebook.com/cogosochapter

Tel: 613.244.4000 ext.4

Email: ecofarmday@cog.ca

Organic by Choice

Date: Saturday, February 21, 2015; 9am-5pm

Location: University of Toronto Conference Centre, 89 Chestnut St., Toronto

Registration details: \$65 (\$85 after Feb. 10); COG members, seniors and students \$55 (\$65 after Feb. 10)

Keynote speaker is Elaine Ingham, a leader in soil microbiology and research of the soil foodweb. She is Founder of Soil Foodweb Inc., an international laboratory system that assesses the balance of microorganisms in soils. The day includes over 20 speakers, an organic lunch and exhibits.

For more information and to register: 647.367.7706 or www.cogtoronto.org

Links to ON Organic Information & Staff Contacts

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Brian Pogue	Beef Cattle Program Lead	519-826-5106
Nancy Noecker	Beef Cow/Calf Specialist	613-258-8476
Delma Kennedy	Sheep Specialist	519-846-3398
Steve Naylor	Aquaculture Specialist	519-826-3172
Tom Hamilton	Beef Cattle Production	705-647-2087
Jack Kyle	Grazier Specialist	705-324-5855
Marlene Paibomesai	Dairy Specialist	519-846-3401

OMAFRA Business Management

John Bancroft	Market Strategies Program Lead	519-271-6974
Jessica Kelly	Direct Farm Marketing	519-846-3404
John Molenhuis	Business Analysis & Cost of Prod.	613-475-9472
Paul Bowers	HR Management Program Lead	519-826-3254
Jennifer Stevenson	Business Finance Program Lead	519-826-4350

Links to Organic Agriculture Information

Organic Council of Ontario (OCO)

<http://www.organiccouncil.ca>

Canadian Organic Growers (COG)

<http://www.cog.ca>

OMAFRA Organic Agriculture

<http://www.ontario.ca/organic>

Ecological Farmers of Ontario (EFO)

<http://www.efao.ca>

Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada

<http://www.oacc.info>

FarmStart

www.farmstart.ca

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