



Ohio State HCS News

HORTICULTURE & CROP SCIENCE IN VIRTUAL PERSPECTIVE - THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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OSU Releases High Tunnel Educational Materials



Farmers gather on Ohio State's OARDC campus in Wooster to discuss the use of high tunnels to extend the growing season.

Already widely used in Europe, with growing pockets of interest in America, high tunnels can help lengthen production and marketing windows for Ohio farmers and protect crops from rain, wind and other stresses - all of which can put more cash in growers' pockets.

The growing interest in lengthening production and marketing windows for Ohio farmers has led Ohio State University Extension to release two new collections of educational materials on high tunnels. Both collections - one an audio CD, one a printed reference packet - stem from Ohio State's November 2006 Horticulture High Tunnels workshop, which featured nearly two dozen speakers and panelists from Ohio and the Midwest and East. The educational materials were developed by farmers for farmers and provide an overview of high tunnel design and construction, integrated crop management, and its role in local marketing.



OSU Vegetable Extension Specialist Matt Kleinhenz is helping growers create wider market windows via high tunnel farming.

"Unheated, plastic-covered, relatively inexpensive structures, high tunnels can grow lots of food on little land, can do it nearly 12 months out of the year even in the upper Midwest, and need less expensive equipment compared to larger-scale, open-field farming methods," explains workshop organizer **Matt Kleinhenz**, an associate professor in the Horticulture & Crop Science Department. "High tunnels help farmers farm successfully on smaller pieces of land. My goal is to help both organic and conventional

growers create wider market 'windows,' and, through high-value crops and local selling, bring great enough returns to make their farms profitable or keep them that way."

The CD features six hours of discussion on high-tunnel design, construction and management, including in organic systems. The speakers, all recorded at the workshop, include nine high-tunnel-using farmers, seven scientists and seven industry professionals: chefs, produce buyers, and market and auction managers. In addition to Ohio farmers, industry professionals, and OSU Extension specialists, high tunnel experts **Ted Carey**, Kansas State University, and **Otho Wells**, University of New Hampshire, are featured on the CD. Audience questions and comments are also included.



Unheated and relatively inexpensive, high tunnels let farmers expand their market and production windows, reports Matt Kleinhenz, who studies the structures as part of a project to evaluate organic transition strategies.

The educational packet compiles 71 pages of color and black-and-white visuals and resource materials used by the speakers and panelists. The CD and packet contain different but complementary information. The cost is \$10 for the CD, \$20 for the packet (discount available for orders of five or more), or \$25 for both. For details and to order, call (330) 263-3810; e-mail kleinhenz.1@osu.edu; or write to Kleinhenz in the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, OSU/OARDC, 1680 Madison Ave., Wooster, OH 44691-4096. When ordering, indicate how many CDs, packets or both are wanted; include your name, full mailing address, telephone number and, if available, e-mail address; and make checks payable to The Ohio State University.

Dr. Kleinhenz's season-extension work was recently featured in an Associated Press article and received national distribution, being picked up by media across the country. Publications who carried the article include: [North Texas e-News](#), [AG Answers](#), [No-Till Farmer](#), [Columbia Tribune](#), [Wilmington Star](#), and [The Register Mail](#). In December 2006, The Columbus Dispatch featured Kleinhenz's work in its "[Undercover Farming: Simple structures let farmers extend or get a jump on growing seasons](#)" article.

publishing by [Victor van Buchem](#).

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