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Wireworm Control in Horticultural Crops

The emergence of wireworms across Prince Edward Island has vegetable growers facing an expanding and very expensive problem. Wireworms attack most vegetables including: bean, carrot, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, radish, rutabaga, and turnip. Farmers are hamstrung by the fact there are no chemicals approved for use to control the pest. That often forces them to take the expensive step of pulling land out of production until the wireworm (the larvae of the click beetle) completes its five year life cycle.

“Even then, there is no guarantee the problem will be solved,” said Joanne Driscoll, manager of the PEI Horticultural Association.

With funding help from the PEI ADAPT Council (which administers the Canadian Agriculture Adaptation Program (CAAP) for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), the Council is looking at exploring natural controls for the pest.

Driscoll said the wireworm project hopes to build on work done by the Dr. Christine Noronha from 2007 to 2009. The scientist at the Crop and Livestock Research Centre of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada identified brown mustard and buckwheat as potential wireworm controls.

Those two crops are integrated into the rotation of three vegetable operations—MacKenzie Produce in Stratford, Brookfield Gardens, and Paul Croken in Emerald.

Brown mustard produces glucosinolates, which break down to act as a fumigant for pests like wireworm. Glucosinolates are found in the root of the plant. The crop must be cut before it goes

to seed and the natural chemical moves up to the seed pod. Driscoll said that means the brown mustard would have no commercial value.

“If the project works like we hope, growers can integrate brown mustard for a couple of years to clean up a field of wireworm,” the manager said.

As far as buckwheat is concerned, Driscoll says research done by both Dr. Noronha and the association indicates that they suspect there is something that acts as a deterrent to pests in its root system. Unlike brown mustard, she said buckwheat could have potential as a rotation crop. The adult wireworm, known as the click beetle, lays its eggs between April and June. The larvae hatch in about three weeks and burrow in the soil up to a metre deep. Driscoll said they take a heavy toll on transplants in the spring.

“It is something we have to explore further. Transplants need about six weeks to get established and during that period they are especially vulnerable to attack from wireworm,” said Driscoll.

However, she said the fall is not as much of a threat to vegetable crops since the wireworm tend to eat primarily on the root and “we don’t sell that.”

While Greg MacKenzie of MacKenzie Produce said it is too soon to pass judgment on how the project will turn out, he is optimistic. He added “before we had absolutely nothing in our toolbox to combat wireworm—at least now we have a possibility.”

Giving Everybody Access to Healthy Food

Will Allen is the CEO of Growing Power, a non-profit that aims to "provide equal access to healthy, high-quality, safe and affordable food for people in all communities".

Many people are called geniuses, but few of them actually get a 'genius' prize from the MacArthur Foundation. Will Allen was one of the rare few to be selected, because he's so visionary that he shows us the way to go forward and does it better than anyone else. Spark has made a great short video that gives an overview of Will Allen's work on the urban farm.

[Click here to check it out!](#)

Canadian Food Summit — February 2012, Toronto

The Conference Board of Canada is hosting a Food Summit conference, February 7-8, 2012 in Toronto. This two day summit features a wide variety of speakers joining together to discuss Canada’s major food challenges and opportunities. Most FOODTECH Canada centres will be in attendance, along with a range of food companies, retailers, senior government and food organizations.

The Conference Board of Canada invites you to join the discussion on the future of food in Canada. [Details of the event can be found on the Conference Board website](#)

An Eye for Apples

Mary MacKay, [The Guardian](#), November 26, 2011

Kevin Garvey of Bethel is somewhat of a Johnny Appleseed of a good Prince Edward Island apple history read. For much of the 2010 growing season, he traipsed across the province collecting seeds of knowledge for a project that grew into a ring-bound booklet entitled *A Part of Our Heritage: A History of Apple Farming on P.E.I.* and a DVD with an interactive database of almost every apple variety grown in the province.

"If you get an eye for seeing an apple tree (you can pick them out easily). When I'm driving I can see an apple tree from a mile away and I can tell whether it's cultivated or not just by where it's located and the growth pattern of it," Garvey grins. "And even today there are so many varieties of apples that are growing out there on P.E.I. . . ."

This apple tree story is rooted in the backyard orchard Garvey started a few years ago that features heritage varieties that he's grafted. Garvey applied for and received funding from the P.E.I. ADAPT Council and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for a heritage apple project last year. During the 2010 growing season he crossed the Island, interviewing apple growers and also attempted to locate the remnants of any historical varieties. He photographed each variety and completed a database that contains details about each variety, both in the present and P.E.I.'s apple-growing past.

"In the early settler days they planted orchards to supply apples (for) vinegar, cider, yeast and dried fruit for the homestead," Garvey says. "But, in the late 19th century there started to be an interest in apple growing (on a commercial scale). In agriculture in general there was a wave of innovation and so Islanders were looking to diversify. And this was at a time when the shipbuilding era was coming to a close and I think they were stepping forward with these new agricultural prospects." In 1896, Lt.-Gov. George Howlan formed the P.E.I. Fruit Growers Association.

"There were several factors, including the efforts and organization of the association, that contributed to the increase in apple production. The apples grown on the Island were of high quality and . . . were awarded prizes at European fruit exhibits in 1900 and 1901," Garvey writes in his book. "Another factor was the establishment of a provincial Department of Agriculture in 1901, which supported apple growing from the very beginning. Within a year, the newly formed department had planted a model orchard at Ravenwood, now known as the Experimental Farms, on the outskirts of Charlottetown."

Model orchards were also set up in Montague, Morell, Springfield, Kensington and Alberton with nine varieties of apples in each. By 1920 the production of apples overall peaked at more than 175,000 bushels, up dramatically from 31,500 in 1880. In fact, by the turn of the 20th century there were upwards of 200,000 apple trees on the Island.

"(Production) started going down in the 1920s. There were a number of factors. The industrialization of farming was just starting to really become organized and solidified in North

America...," Garvey says. "So, at this time a lot of these industries were just starting to get their shipping and their storage and their co-operatives all together. Nova Scotia was able to succeed at that before we were able to and so shipping was a major issue for us. And also the fact that we weren't able to establish a co-operative with centralized warehousing quick enough to really get ahead of the game and beat out some of these competitors."

Apple production dwindled to almost nothing. But in the last two decades there has been a renewed interest in apple growing, with approximately a half dozen apple growers in commercial operation today. "Many of them have created successful U-picks and other value-added industries (such as cider, jellies and apple wine)," Garvey says.

For Garvey, the apple of his eye for his booklet was the Inkerman, a variety that was bred in New Perth by John Robertson in the late 1800s. "He planted an orchard of 24 acres (to start) and over the years he discovered this chance seedling which he named the Inkerman. . . It won prizes in Glasgow and Paris," he says.

"In John Robertson's own words 'The Inkerman grew up from an imported tree that had died to the ground. It is an excellent fruit that endures anything.' And so back in the day when you had minimal amounts of spray equipment you're really looking for an apple that is hardy (and) that wouldn't get infested with disease."

After reading an article about the Inkerman apple Garvey went in search of the old Robertson homestead in the hopes of finding any trace of it. Although he struck out he still has hope that somehow he will one day find an offspring of Robertson's famous Inkerman. "He was supplying trees to a vast majority of the Island. He was growing upwards of 10,000 trees a year for people," he says.

"It's documented that he had 865 Inkerman apple trees for sale this particular one year. That's a lot of trees. If it is hardy and endures anything, chances are it probably still does exist."

In addition to the booklet, also part of Garvey's apple research package is the heritage apple database that is useful not only to present-day apple farmers who want to grow some of these old varieties but also for people who want to rediscover what is steadfastly still growing in their own backyards.

"(The booklet and the DVD are) supposed to inspire people, whether it's to support local farmers and buy local produce or to start their own farm."

Grassfed Cooking

Shannon Hayes writes and works with her family on Sap Bush Hollow Farm in Upstate New York, where they raise pastured livestock. She holds a Ph.d. in sustainable agriculture and community development from Cornell, and a B.A. in Creative Writing from Binghamton University. She is the author of *The Farmer and the Grill* and *The Grassfed Gourmet*, as well as numerous articles and essays on food, farming and rural living. To learn more about Sap Bush

Hollow Farm, visit www.sapbush.com.

She is both a third-generation farmer as well as an example of the paradigm shift that exemplifies the new generation of farmers who are committed to saving the family farm by avoiding debt and protecting the planet with sustainable farming practices.

www.grassfedcooking.com is a source of everything worth knowing about cooking with grass-fed meats and grass-fed farm life. It's also the place where you can buy books directly from the author.

Local Food Is No Small Potatoes: Farmers Rake In Almost \$5 Billion

by Nancy Shute

It's easy to think of local food as a diversion for people with plenty of time and money - something that could never be a major source of food in a globalized world. But the number \$4.8 billion might change that perception.

Farmers are selling \$4.8 billion a year in fruits and vegetables in their local markets, according to a new analysis by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"There have been a lot of questions in the past if promoting local foods is even worth it," says Sarah Low, an economist with the USDA's Economic Research Service, co-author of the study. But with these numbers, she suggests that there could be a lot more room to increase demand."

Indeed, the lion's share - \$2.7 to \$3.8 billion - came from farmers selling food through channels like restaurants and grocery stores. It was the first time the USDA has included those sales in surveying local food markets.

The restaurant and store markets are attracting bigger farmers who have too much produce to efficiently sell direct to consumers, Low says. "Forty percent of all fruit and vegetable producers are now selling locally," she added. And even though her numbers don't explicitly track growth, "that to me suggests some growth."

This survey asked farmers about their 2008 crops, and they don't include two hot new markets - sales of local produce to schools and institutions like hospitals and prisons. (The USDA launched a program to nurture partnerships between local farms and schools earlier this year.) Lowe says future surveys will include those as well.

Although the \$4.8 billion number sounds big, it represents just 2 percent of American agricultural sales. The rest - 98 percent - comes largely from sales of big commodities like soybeans and corn. Even so, the next set of numbers on local food sales from USDA should reveal whether local food is a fad, or a business model that's here to stay.

Also Read:

'Locally Grown' Food Now A \$4.8 Billion Business, Says USDA Report

By Jim Suhr 11/14/11; Associated PressAP; Source: Huffington Post