Mary Conklin, New Extension Educator in Fruit Production & IPM at the University of Connecticut

Mary Conklin has been involved in the fruit industry for over 35 years as a grower, consultant and an Extension Educator. She holds an A.S. degree in Fruit & Vegetable Crops from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture, a B.S. degree in Plant and Soil Science from UMass, and an M.S. degree in horticulture from West Virginia University where she conducted research on frost protection in orchards, and an M.S. in Education from the College of St. Rose.

She began her extension career with Cornell as a fruit specialist in the Hudson Valley in the 1980s where she developed an interest in plant nutrition working with Dr. Warren Stiles. From there she moved to Penn State University where she worked for Penn State Cooperative Extension, serving as a regional Horticulture Educator with strong programs in fruit, vegetables, landscape, nursery, pesticide application, and Master Gardener volunteer training. Research projects included plant nutrient management in ornamental nursery plants.

In 2009, Mary moved to CT and worked for the University of Connecticut IPM program training fruit and vegetable growers with NRCS-EQIP contracts, teaching Master Gardener classes on tree fruit and small fruit, and assisting with research projects on various grants, while also working as a freelance writer.

Mary joined the University of Connecticut in March 2012 as the Extension Educator for commercial fruit production and IPM. She has a strong interest in soil health and its relationship to plant health and pest management. She is presently involved in a project with Cornell looking at soil health as it relates to berry plant nutrition and health. With the arrival of the SWD in late summer 2011, Mary has been heavily involved in working with growers on monitoring and management of this new invasive pest.

Mary works closely with the CT Pomological Society, and is coordinating the annual fruit grower meeting to be held on Tuesday, December 4 at The Gallery Restaurant in Glastonbury, CT.

In addition to her extension position, Mary and her husband Pete, own and operate a pick-your-own berry farm also growing and selling vegetables, fresh culinary herbs, and cut-flowers.