

Farm and Weather Summary, Horticulture Station

Will Emley, superintendent

Farm Comments

The transfer of the Horticulture Station to the Research and Demonstration Farms unit has been very successful. Capital improvements and maintenance at the Horticulture Station facilities have been a priority. The installation of the rural water to the building facilities was a major accomplishment. Several hydrants will be added in 2005.

Developments. Richard Clayton joined the Horticulture Station in 2004. Rich has a dual appointment and shares time and professional expertise between the aquatics program and the general horticulture research programs.

The prison inmate work program was used again to help with labor deficiencies. Inmates from the Women's Correctional Facility at Mitchellville provided 765 hours harvesting the apple crop. Inmates from the North Central Iowa Correctional Facility at Rockwell City provided 160 hours removing an abandoned shrub research project.

The apple harvest began on August 31 and was completed on October 12. Approximately 1,690 bushels of apples were harvested. A frost on May 3 injured the Chieftain bloom and reduced the harvest by 60%. Chieftain is the premier apple grown for wholesale distribution. Approximately 740 bushels of apples were sold wholesale to the local retail apple growers. Another 270 bushels were sorted, packed, and sold on consignment to the ISU Residence Hall Food Service and the ISU Horticulture Club.

Field Days

Fruit and Vegetable Field Day: On July 12, 100 attendees participated in a tour of the Hort Station and research discussions concerning traditional small fruit and vegetable production as well as organic production.

Turf Grass Field Day: On July 22, 300 attendees participated in classes, tours, and demonstrations. Seventy-one distributors were represented.

Aquatic Field Day: On July 23, 20 people attended the first field day at the newly constructed aquaculture research facility.

Demonstration Garden Field Day: Forty gardeners were involved in a garden tour and food identification and tasting program on July 27.

Iowa Nurseryman's Association Board Meeting: Board members assembled for their annual meeting and a tour of the ornamentals research projects.

Iowa Aquaculture Association Conference: Members met for a workshop and tour of the new facilities.

Horticulture 221, Principles of Horticulture: Class tours introduced 150 students to the Horticulture Station in April and October.

New Projects

New projects further diversified the research at the Hort Station. Dr. Brian Wilsey in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology has established a prairie research program. Several apple orchards are presently or soon will be planted to create a multipurpose field laboratory available for horticulture and plant pathology research.

Weather Comments

The Horticulture Station received a total of 31.95 in. of precipitation for the year. March was wet, and April was very dry. Starting in May, a consistent pattern of showers through August produced an average of 4.65 in. of rain/month. Consequently, the demand for irrigation was lessened with approximately 4.5 million gallons pumped from the lake to sustain the various crops including turf. The lake maintained an adequate level throughout the year. The summer high temperatures were mild. July and August average highs of only 78°F made the summer quite comfortable.

Other weather data for central Iowa can be found in Table 1 in the Ag Engineering/Agronomy Farm report on page 3.