

WSJM February 8, 2006 – Chestnut Workshop

This is Al Gaus the Berrien County Extension Educator for fruit and ornamentals reporting from the MSU Extension office in Berrien County. Today, I want to remind you to not forget about today's SW Michigan Hort Day meeting at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center. In addition, I also want tell you about an upcoming program that involves Chestnuts.

It is a workshop, called "Interested in Growing Chestnuts?". It will take place February 18 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. at the Clarksville Horticultural Experiment Station near Clarksville, MI a few miles east of Grand Rapids. Dr. Dennis Fulbright, professor of plant pathology at Michigan State University (MSU) and coordinator of the Rogers Reserve, a 116-acre farm in Jackson County committed to nut- and fruit-bearing trees, is offering this workshop. Topics will include an introduction to establishing a chestnut orchard, selecting the right tree varieties, determining where and when to plant, and what it takes to manage a chestnut grove, including an overview on pruning, irrigation, fertilization, and pest, disease and weed control. Fulbright will also talk about harvesting, handling, storing and selling chestnuts.

The chestnut workshop is free, but people are asked to register. Call our office at 944-4126 for details on how to register.

Anyone who's interested in learning more about what's involved with getting started in the chestnut industry or has an entrepreneurial spirit will want to attend the workshop.

"The edible chestnut market is becoming increasingly profitable," Dr. Fulbright notes. "We're at the point where we need more growers to be able to meet demand."

The workshop will be hosted by the Midwest Nut Producers Council, a professional group of nut growers founded in the late 1980s to support commercialization of nut trees through research and education. The group focuses primarily on chestnut research and outreach, and it owns the only machine dedicated to peeling chestnuts in North America.

Repeating, there will be a workshop on Chestnut production on February 18 in Clarksville, MI. Call our office for details.

That is all for today, this has been Al Gaus for Michigan State University Extension in Berrien County.