

## Kansas Rural Center's Specialty Crop Workshops

**Registration is open for the Kansas Rural Center's Specialty Crop Workshops in Scandia and Leavenworth this March. The Scandia workshop will be held on Saturday, March 3, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Scandia Community Center, 406 4th Street, Scandia. The Leavenworth workshop will be held on Friday, March 9, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at The Barn at Schwinn Produce, 17624 Santa Fe Trail, Leavenworth. There is a \$15 registration fee for each workshop, which will cover the cost of lunch and materials.**

**Register for the March 3, SCANDIA workshop here -**

**[http://bit.ly/ScandiaSCW\\_KRC](http://bit.ly/ScandiaSCW_KRC).**

**Register for the March 9, LEAVENWORTH workshop here -**

**[http://bit.ly/LeavenworthSCW\\_KRC](http://bit.ly/LeavenworthSCW_KRC).**

**Or visit- <https://kansasruralcenter.org/krcs-2018-specialty-crop-workshops/>**

*Please register by Monday, February 26, for the Scandia workshop, and by Monday, March 5, for the Leavenworth workshop. Registration is required in order to get an accurate lunch count.*

**The workshops will provide information and education necessary for beginning specialty crop growers to establish a successful specialty crop enterprise in Kansas. Each workshop will focus on conservation, production and marketing practices for specialty crop growers, and will provide an excellent opportunity for beginning growers to connect with and learn from experienced growers.**

**Each workshop will provide information on the state of specialty crops in Kansas, with David Coltrain answering the question, "What's Special About Specialty Crops?" Coltrain will look at current production, historical production, and potential production of specialty crops in Kansas. Economic considerations and enterprise budgets for growing**

**specialty crops will be covered.**

**Information on accessing the many resources that are available to help specialty crop growers be successful in their operations will be provided at each workshop. Organizations that offer resources to specialty crop growers include: Kansas Department of Agriculture; K-State Research and Extension; USDA groups, including SARE, NRCS, RMA, FSA; and farm credit lenders. At each workshop, a representative from one of the groups will be on hand to talk about the resources and to answer questions. This session will also provide a number of websites with important information for growers.**

**At the Scandia workshop, Mark Stadler, manager of Dan Kuhn's farm in Republic County, which is one of the state's largest wholesale growers of fruits and vegetables, will talk about lay flat blackberries. Wade Hambright, who was introduced to wine grapes at age five when his dad planted his first grape vines in 2002, will talk about establishing a vineyard on your farm. Hambright is a manager at a vineyard management company in Manhattan, Kansas, and continues to grow and manage his family's vineyard and other vineyards in the area.**

**Tom Buller, K-State Research and Extension Horticulture Agent, Douglas County, will discuss efficient vegetable production system that help farmers scale up their operation. Buller is an organic specialty crop grower and part of a Fresh Farm HQ, a regional food hub that serves the KC metro area, and includes several members from near Clay Center.**

**The Scandia workshop will include a farm tour of C & C High Tunnels, owned and operated by Chris and Christi Janssen. The Janssens have three high tunnels, each measuring 30 x 150 feet, and will be finishing up production of winter salad greens at the time of the farm tour.**

**The Janssens have been growing and marketing locally grown fresh produce year-round since 2009. Their major summer crops are tomatoes and cantaloupe, but they grow a variety of other vegetables and fruits as well. During the winter months they raise fresh spinach, baby kale, and a mix of spring salad greens. They follow natural practices in the nurturing, cultivation, and harvesting of their plants, including an integrated pest management program and lots of hands on labor.**

**In addition to the state of specialty crops overview from David Coltrain**

**and information on resources available to specialty crop growers, the Leavenworth workshop will include a presentation by Stu Shafer, Chair of Johnson County Community College's (JCCC) Sustainable Agriculture Program. Shafer will discuss building bridges for sustainable agriculture education from a specialty crop base. The JCCC Sustainable Agriculture Department was recently awarded a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, for work on this issue.**

**Shafer is also an experienced specialty crop grower and a founding farmer of Rolling Prairie Farmers Alliance, which is the longest running Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations in the Midwest. Shafer will talk about this experience in his presentation "Grower Cooperatives: Strength in Numbers".**

**Jerry Wohletz, who is the owner and operator of Wohletz's Farm Fresh u-pick strawberry farm, will talk about growing and selling fruits and vegetables in the Midwest. In addition to u-pick strawberries on the farm, the Wohletz's sell their strawberries and other produce at farmers markets in Lawrence and Overland Park. They put a premium on growing produce in a healthy, sustainable manner, utilizing crop rotations, cover crops and other strategies.**

**Also speaking at the Leavenworth workshop is Jacob Thomas, who will speak about managing a highly diversified small farm. Thomas is a third generation farmer from Leavenworth, who started growing vegetables because he became interested in helping to feed his community and as a way to increase profits on his family's limited land. Thomas grows vegetables in five high tunnels on eight acres, and sells his produce at farmers markets and to local restaurants.**

**The Leavenworth workshop will include a farm tour of Schwinn Produce Farm. Joe Schwinn will talk about the operation, and his experience growing asparagus, strawberries, cut flowers, corn, tomatoes, melons, peppers and pumpkins.**

**For more detailed information on each workshop and to register, please visit - <https://kansasruralcenter.org/krcs-2018-specialty-crop-workshops/>.**

**The workshops are part of a five-workshop series that the Kansas Rural Center is hosting this March, as part of their "Linking Experienced and Beginning Kansas Specialty Crop Farmers to Share Information for**

**Establishing Successful Specialty Crop Enterprises Project," which is funded by the Kansas Department of Agriculture through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program.**

**KRC will also be hosting specialty crop workshops in:**

**South Hutchinson, on Tuesday, March 20**

**Dighton, on Wednesday, March 21, and**

**Erie, on Saturday, March 31.**

**More information, and registration, for these workshops will be coming out soon!**

**For more information and to register for the workshops, please visit- <https://kansasruralcenter.org/krcs-2018-specialty-crop-workshops/>**

**To learn more about the workshops, please contact David Coltrain at 620-330-3951 or [coltraindavid@gmail.com](mailto:coltraindavid@gmail.com), or email [info@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:info@kansasruralcenter.org). For questions about the project as a whole, please contact Mary Fund at [mfund@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:mfund@kansasruralcenter.org) or 866-579-5469.**