

Fifth International Pawpaw Conference

“Cultivating Excellence: The Next Chapter in Pawpaw Development”

**Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm
Kentucky State University
Frankfort, Kentucky**

September 9-11, 2025

Tentative Schedule of Events

Tuesday, September 9 - Pre-Conference Tour and Nursery Visit

Pre-Conference Tour and Nursery Visit to England's Orchard & Nursery, McKee, KY

Wednesday Morning (September 10): Benson Farm

Registration (8-9 a.m.)

Introduction to the Conference (9-9:10 a.m.)

- Dr. Kirk W. Pomper – Professor of Horticulture, KSU
- Mr. Dan Matesich – President, North American Pawpaw Growers Association
- Mr. Chris Chmiel – Ohio Pawpaw Festival
- Dr. Curt Rom – American Society for Horticultural Science

Pawpaw Register for New Varieties - Presentation and Discussion (9:10-10 a.m.)

- Dr. Kirk Pomper, Dr. Mark DeBard, Mr. R. Neal Peterson

New Pawpaw Cultivars and Breeding Efforts Part I (10-10:40 a.m.)

- A New Peterson Cultivar – Mr. R. Neal Peterson (20 min)
- New Pawpaw Releases KSU-1-4 and KSU-7-1 – Dr. Kirk Pomper (20 min)

Break and Fruit Tasting (10:40-11 a.m.)

Participant fruit to taste

New Pawpaw Cultivars and Breeding Efforts Part II (11 a.m.-12 p.m.)

- Project Pawpaw – Adam D'Angelo (20 min)
- Ketter Rediscovered – Rodney Dever (20 min)
- Selecting cultivars for Northern regions – Timothy Lane (20 min)

Wednesday Lunch: Provided at Benson Farm (12-1 p.m.)

Wednesday Afternoon: Benson Farm**Grower Round Table (1-2 p.m.)**

- Chris Chmiel, Justin Husher, Bob Johnson, Dan Matesich, Matt Menegotto, Roger Ort, and Marc Stadler

New Pawpaw Cultivars and Breeding Efforts Part III (2-2:45 p.m.)

- Tom Wahl – Pawpaw Breeding at Red Fern Farm (15 min)
- Mike Smith – Asimina hybrid breeding in North Florida, for improved traits of both A. triloba and scrub Pawpaw Species (15 min)
- Matt Soltys – The beginning of Canada's first participatory breeding program for pawpaw (15 min)

Break and Fruit tasting (2:45-3 p.m.) *People bring their own fruit to taste***Nursery Industry Round Table (3-4 p.m.)**

- James Spencer Briggs (Green Mammoth Nursery), Blake Cothron (Peaceful Heritage Nursery), Clifford England (England's Orchard and Nursery), Bill Nash (Nash Nurseries), Roger Ort (Ort Family Farm), Charles West (West Farm Nursery)

State and Country Pawpaw Grower Reports (4-4:30 p.m.) *Reports from those attending the Conference***Best Pawpaw Fruit Award (4:30-4:40 p.m.)****KSU Pawpaw Cultivar Announcement (4:40-4:50 p.m.)****Pawpaw Vendor Fair and Product Tasting****Vendor Fair (4:50-5:30 p.m.)**

- Ale-8-One, Sig Luscher, Whiskey Thief, Rising Sons Winery, Wildside Winery

Registered vendors: Hang Loose Pawpaw Patch, Peaceful Heritage Nursery LLC, Green Mammoth Nursery, Petrichor Pawpaws

Poster Session (4:50-5:30 p.m.)

- Nabin Adhikari – Verifying Parentage of Offspring from Crosses of the Pawpaw Cultivars using Simple Sequence Repeat (SSR) Markers
- Robert G. Brannan, Ph.D. – Pawpaw Nutritional Information Now Available in USDA FoodData Central Database
- Robert G. Brannan, Ph.D. – Characterizing Enzymatic Juice Extraction from Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
- Robert G. Brannan, Ph.D. – Consumer Insights into Juice from Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
- Robert G. Brannan, Ph.D. – We Need Your Help to Create a Master List of Pawpaw Varieties (Cultivars)!
- Robert G. Brannan, Ph.D. – Post-Harvest Quality Attributes of Named Cultivars of Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
- Griffin Erich – Effect of postharvest 1-methylcyclopropane (1-MCP) application on four *Asimina triloba* (pawpaw) cultivars
- Shelby George – Influence of Price, Source, and Production on Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) Purchasing Preferences
- Shelby George – Consumer Habits and Beliefs Related to Pawpaws (*Asimina triloba*)
- Andrea Miller and Molly Jo Stanley – Native Foods Education Organization
- Joseph C. Scheerens – The Efficacy of Under-tree Netting as a Cultural Practice for Harvesting and Marketing High-quality Pawpaw Fruit
- Kshitij Shahi – Extending Postharvest Shelf-Life of Pawpaw
- Subas Thapa Magar – Insect Pollinators in Pawpaw

Finger foods, Vendor Fair, and Networking (5:30-8 p.m.)

Thursday Morning, September 11: Benson Farm

Growing Pawpaw in Kentucky (8:30-9:30 a.m.)

- Dr. Kirk W. Pomper (20 min)
- Sheri Crabtree (20 min)
- Jeremy Lowe (20 min)

Pawpaw Around the World (9:30-11:30 a.m.)

- Ioana-Mihaela Mihălcioiu – TBA (15 min)
- Ben Baque (15 min) – Pawpaws in France and Europe
- Emmanuel Aze (15 min) – Some technical choices in a new nursery in the South West of France, specializing in pawpaws
- Andrej Krasna (15 min) – From Orchard to Nursery

- Marco Viher – Enhancing the Grafting Success of Pawpaws (*Asimina triloba*) Through Hot Callus Pipe Grafting and Alignment with the Lunar Cycle (15 min)
- Ivan Sulog – TBA (Zoom/Virtual) (15 min)

Thursday Lunch, Fruit Tasting, and Vendor Fair (11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

Thursday Afternoon, September 11: Benson Farm

Submitted Talks on Pawpaw (12:30-3:30 p.m.) (15 min each)

1. Dr. Pomper – Acetogenin Update (15 min)
2. Dr. Loren Kirschner – Neurologic Effects of Acetogenins: What do we really know? (15 min)
3. Matt Menegotto – Starting a pawpaw orchard for beginners (15 min)
4. Blake Cothron – Important Diseases of Pawpaw (15 min)
5. Sarah Francino – Pawpaw [*Asimina triloba* (L.) Dunal] Female and Male Reproductive Competency Influencing Productivity and Hybridization Potential (15 min)
6. Guil Signorini – Pawpaw Businesses in the Eastern U.S.: A 5-Year Industry Review and Recommendations for a Resilient Value Chain (15 min)

Break (15 minutes)

7. Justin Husher – TBA (15 min)
8. Griffin Erich – Metabolomic Profiling of *Asimina triloba* 'Shenandoah' Across Tissues and Harvest Times (15 min)
9. James Dingus – Pawpaws: Why Care? (15 min)
10. Ted Weeden – Issues with growing pawpaw trees in very pure clay soils (15 min)
11. Steve Tulowiecki – Trends in pawpaw prevalence, abundance, and dominance from 2008-2021 based on Forest Inventory and Analysis data (Virtual) (15 min)

KSU Orchard Tours Pawpaw and Cultivar Fruit Tasting (3:30-5 p.m.)

Grafting Demo (3:30-3:50 p.m. and 3:50-4:10 p.m.)

- Dr. Ron Powell and Mr. R. Neal Peterson

Processing and Jam Making Demo (3:30-3:50 p.m. and 3:50-4:10 p.m.)

- Joni Nelson and Matt Behrends

Orchard Tour (4:10-4:45 p.m.)

- Kirk Pomper and Jeremy Lowe

Cultivar Fruit Tasting (4:45-5:30 p.m.)

Dinner (5:30-8 p.m.)

- Show and tell
 - Keynote speaker: Ron Powell – A Legacy of Pawpaws
 - Lifetime Achievement Award
-

Friday Morning, September 12

Tour at Whiskey Thief Distillery in Frankfort, Kentucky (Additional Cost)