

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for September 26, 2022
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about dirt candy, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

My job in Extension has taken me on some pretty unique adventures. Last week I attended my first in-person national conference for the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. It was hosted in Raleigh, North Carolina, home of North Carolina State University.

I always appreciate and enjoy the tours that these national conferences organize to allow us to see the innovative work of the farmers and business owners in their communities. Ten years ago, I saw peanut and cotton fields for the first time in my life near Charleston, South Carolina. This time, our tour group learned all about sweetpotatoes.

Sweetpotato is one word- not two words- according to the North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission. And another clarification – sweetpotatoes and yams are not the same root vegetable. Yams have dry, starchy flesh and a dark bark-like skin. In the US, the majority of sweetpotatoes have either rose to purple colored skin with orange, white or purple flesh. Botanically speaking, sweetpotatoes and yams are in different families.

An average, over 65 percent of the sweetpotatoes in the US are produced in North Carolina. Almost all sweetpotatoes sold in grocery stores east of the Mississippi originated in North Carolina. They have remained the top-producing state each year since 1971. The soil type and climate conditions are ideal there for sweetpotato production.

We toured Kornegy Family Farms and Produce in Johnson County, North Carolina, about halfway between Raleigh and the coast. Our amazing tour guide was Kim (Kornegy) LaQuire, a fourth-generation farmer. She farms over 5,000 acres with her father, mother, and brother. They grow three kinds of produce- watermelon, sweetpotatoes, and butternut squash. They also grow tobacco, soybeans, cotton, and have a swine finishing operation.

She told us that she is a farmer “who sits behind a desk.” I love that. She explained that there are things her brother does with production that she cannot do. And there are things she does with

financial management that her brother cannot do. That mixture of humility and confidence, and undeniable faith in the Lord's provision, is what makes this such a successful operation.

Sweetpotato harvest was just beginning during our visit. It is fairly labor intensive. There is equipment to dig the sweetpotatoes up out of the soil, but they must be gathered by hand and put into large crates for storage. Sweetpotatoes are cured after harvest and then can be stored for an entire year in huge climate-controlled storage buildings.

We also were able to view the washing, sorting, and packing process. The ideal sweetpotato can be held easily in your hand. But any gardener knows that produce is anything but consistent. So, the smaller and larger sweetpotatoes will find their way into cans, fries, or even tater tots.

Though locally they are called "dirt candy," sweetpotatoes have about the same total carbohydrate count as a medium white potato, about 25 grams. Nutritionally speaking, sweetpotatoes are an excellent source of vitamin A and good source of fiber.

The NC Sweetpotato Commission has a wide variety of delicious sweet and savory recipes at ncsweetpotatoes.com/recipes. I'm looking forward to trying Curried Sweetpotato Apple Soup, Mini Sweetpotato Chicken Flat Bread Pizza, and Sweetpotato Cranberry Cookies.

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. The Coshocton County Fair begins this Friday! We would love to have you attend the Tasting Smorgasbord next Tuesday, October 4 at 12:30 pm to try samples of tasty creations from our 4-H members. We also encourage you to bring cans of food when you attend to help with the Farm Credit "Stock the Tractor" competition that will benefit our local Salvation Army.

Also, the Take Charge of Your Diabetes During the Holidays program will be Thursday, November 3 from 6:00-7:30 PM at Frontier Power Community Room. This evening will provide you with tips for managing your diabetes during the holidays. Cooking demonstrations and samples will be provided. Register online for this free program at coshocton.osu.edu or call OSU Extension at 740-622-2265.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!