



## Summer Meeting Announced

The New Hampshire Plant Growers will be hosting their annual summer meeting this July 23, 2013 at Spring Ledge Farm in New London, NH. The association is also very proud to be hosting Chris Beytes, editor and publisher of Grower Talks magazine. Chris's weekly Acres Online is read by over 16,000 readers and covers topics that affect horticulture nationally as well as globally.

Spring Ledge Farm has been owned by NHPGA members Greg and Astrid Berger since 2005. The farm is run seasonally from April through Christmas and grows both greenhouse crops and fresh vegetables in a vibrant community. Greg has also introduced a unique twist on the CSA model that might be of interest to most NHPGA members that is bringing in much needed winter revenue to help offset the non-revenue months during the winter.

The NHPGA is very excited to continue to attract a variety of nationally recognized speakers of value of its members and Chris Beytes is no exception. Chris is a University of Florida alumnus and has experience as a grower as well as covering the industry now for the past 20 years. Chris had the pleasure of working with the late Vic Ball for four years, and brings a wealth of knowledge as well as a humorous and light wit in his view of the horticulture and agriculture industries.

The NHPGA asks that you set aside the afternoon of July 23 to gather with other members, and learn about one of New Hampshire's great agriculture/horticulture businesses as well as some insights on the industry from Grower Talks and Ball Publishing. There will also be social time as well as dinner.

To reserve a spot, please contact the NHPGA through the New Hampshire Farm Bureau office at (603)224-1934 or look for sign up information at nhpga.org.



Photo Credit: MichaelSeamans.com

### Member Profile: Spring Ledge Farm

Spring Ledge Farm grows on 35 acres in the Kearsarge/Lake Sunapee region. We are a diverse farm offering greenhouse ornamental crops ranging from asters to zinnias, perennials, shrubs, mums and poinsettias. These ornamentals are all sold through our farm stand on Main Street in New London. The farm also grows vegetables, strawberries, blueberries, cut flowers and raspberries.

Spring Ledge was started by John and Sue Clough in 1976. The location of the farm on Main Street in picturesque New London, NH

is ideal for this roadside market. The Cloughs sold the development rights and put the farm acreage under a conservation easement in 1991 to ensure an agricultural presence in New London for years to come. After working on the farm since high school (1985), Greg Berger bought the farm from the Cloughs in 2005.



Photo Credit: Spring Ledge

Photo Credit: MichaelSeamans.com

The farm can be thought of as three "businesses" that work together to create a great shopping experience for our customers. The greenhouse portion operates in 14 houses and cold frames, growing all the annuals, hanging baskets, vegetable transplants, mums, poinsettias and seedlings. The crops from the greenhouses are all sold through the farm stand and we supply fresh material for our customers most every day of the week.

The field portion operates on 30 acres and produces everything from arugula to zucchini. The field crew grows and supplies fresh produce to the farm stand on a daily basis. Sweet corn, strawberries, tomatoes and greens are the most popular items and we strive to provide the best-tasting varieties to our customers.

The farm stand portion is the public face of the farm, retailing all the greenhouse and field products and sourcing locally made items from around the state and region. Along with our own fresh produce and plants, we offer local dairy, meats, cheeses, artisan breads, jams, apples, and great customer service.

### Introducing On-line Office Hours at The UNH Cooperative Extension

Click here to Chat with our Extension Specialist -

Brian Krug



Beginning in February Brian Krug, State Specialist for Greenhouse and Floriculture Crops at the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, has offered a new way to connect with UNH and get your questions answered: On-Line Office Hours.

You may be used to chatting with a customer service representative on your favorite retail website; now you can have the same experience with Brian. On-line office hours will be held every Wednesday from 3-4 pm. Why on-line office hours? It is all in an effort to provide additional opportunities to connect with Brian and ask any questions you have, no matter how small or insignificant you think they are. There is an added bonus to on-line interactions that are not possible via traditional means – e.g. telephone or e-mail. Once connected via webcam, Brian can provide you with a link to

connect with a webcam to continue the conversation 'face-to-face'. We all know how valuable it is to not only connect with Extension Staff but also with other growers, but that gets difficult during the busy spring. These face-to-face videoconferences can also become a conversation between Brian and multiple growers.

To take advantage of the on-line office hours browse to the UNH Floriculture website (nhfloriculture.com). You will find the link at the bottom of the page for "On-Line Office Hours". Clicking on the link between 3 and 4 on Wednesdays will connect you with Brian. Click on it any other time and you will be prompted to leave Brian an e-mail message.

Of course you can always contact Brian through more traditional methods (email or phone) but next time you have a question for Brian, try out the on-line office hours.

### NHHE Awards \$5000 Grant

New Hampshire Horticulture Endowment, the granting arm of the New Hampshire Plant Growers Association, is pleased to announce that a grant of \$5000 was awarded to Dr. Cathy Neal and Dr. Brian Krug of the University of New Hampshire. Their project, Partnership for Consumer Focused Videos, will involve collaboration between UNH Cooperative Extension Specialists and Garden Center owners/managers to produce videos that will address some of the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) NH Garden Center owners/employees answer repeatedly during the busy spring season. Once completed, they will be made available from Cooperative Extension via a YouTube Channel to NH garden centers to embed on their own websites as a resource for their customers.

The project has three goals. The first is to give NH garden centers a reliable resource to send customers to so their FAQs can be addressed. The videos will have visual demonstrations accompanied by verbal instructions. This will free up employees to direct their talents to other tasks including generating more sales. A second goal of the project is to increase a gardener's success. Younger generations of up and coming garden enthusiasts are used to finding their information on-line. A successful gardening experience leads to repeat sales at the garden center. The final goal of the project is to offer instruction to garden centers on creating their own videos unique to their businesses. Drs. Neal and Krug note that the project "will enhance the competitive position of local independent garden centers by providing a resource for educating current and potential customers that is immediately available, effective and increases customer satisfaction".

The completed videos will be done this fall. NH Cooperative Extension will offer training in the spring of 2014 for garden centers in the use of the videos to enhance their businesses.

Learn More about the NHPGA, visit [NHPGA.org](http://NHPGA.org)

