

Media Contact: Ryan McGeeney • rmcgeeney@uaex.edu • [@Ryan\_McG44](https://twitter.com/Ryan_McG44) • 501-671-2120

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**Division of Agriculture to offer online strawberry school**

By Ryan McGeeney
U of A System Division of Agriculture

**Fast Facts:**

* Six free webinars offered throughout the year
* Each webinar covers a different aspect of strawberry cultivation and development
* Register at <https://bit.ly/StrawberrySchool21>

(371 words)

CLARKSVILLE, Ark. — For growers who have ever wanted to try their hand at cultivating strawberries, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is providing a golden opportunity to do it with expert advice and guidance, all year long.

Beginning Feb. 16, Division of Agriculture horticulture experts will begin a six-part webinar series, covering major management practices and crop development appropriate to strawberries in each season of the year.

The course will focus on plasticulture production, which uses black plastic mulch to warm soil and stop weeds. Amanda McWhirt, extension horticulture crop specialist for the Division of Agriculture, said this is the most common method of producing strawberries on a commercial scale in the southeastern United States.

Experts on strawberry production from across the Southeast will be on hand to teach both the basics of production and provide up-to-date recommendations for the best results in the region.

Focus areas for the six webinars include:

* Dormancy (Feb. 16)
* Bloom (March 18)
* Fruiting (April 20)
* Pre-plant, part 1 (July 29)
* Pre-plant, part 2 (August 12)
* Fall management (TBD)

Each webinar is scheduled to stream live at noon, CST, on their respective dates with the exception of April 20, which will stream at 5 p.m. CST.

“This course is meant to help new and beginning growers learn the basics of how to succeed in strawberry production in the Southeast, and hopefully avoid some common mistakes,” McWhirt said. “By the end of the course, growers should know the best management practices required to produce strawberries in our region.

“Established growers can also benefit from attending as well,” she said. “We will provide up-to-date recommendations on disease, fertility and crop management as the season progresses.”

The series is a follow-up to previous Division of Agriculture productions, including blueberry and blackberry schools, both of which are available for viewing on the Fruit and Vegetable Program’s YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/UAEXFruitVegetableExtension/playlists>.

Participants will join a Zoom webinar for each session, which will require a computer or tablet, an internet connection and audio speakers. A Zoom subscription or account is not required. More information will be provided to users upon registration.

There is no cost to attend. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/StrawberrySchool21>. For more information about the individual courses, visit [uaex.edu/strawberry-school](https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/crops-commercial-horticulture/horticulture/commercial-fruit-production/strawberry-school.aspx).

To learn more about extension programs in Arkansas, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service agent or visit [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu). Follow us on Twitter at [@UAEX\_edu](http://www.twitter.com/uaex_edu).

**About the Division of Agriculture**

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s mission is to strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices. Through the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service, the Division of Agriculture conducts research and extension work within the nation’s historic land grant education system.

The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

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