

Garden Update

Week of March 29, 2021

Kathleen Cue, Nebraska Extension Horticulture Educator

Raising Awareness of Pesticide Drift

DriftWatch® and BeeCheck® are two resources available to the people of Nebraska to register their specialty crops and beehives. Likewise, pesticide applicators can sign up with FieldCheck® to view maps and receive notifications of sensitive crops and apiaries in their region. Sign up for producers, beekeepers and pesticide applicators is voluntary, with the goal to promote awareness and reduce pesticide drift.

This communication tool was originally developed by Purdue University and has spread across the country. The program provides verification of each producer's submittal for their site. For applicators, the website is a tool to determine sensitive sites before they spray. Producers can register their sensitive crops, including grapes, fruits, orchards, vegetables, industrial hemp, nut trees, fish farms, beehives, and high tunnels, just to name a few, as well as crops certified as organic. The web page's interactive maps allow registered applicators to zoom in at the county and community level, scrolling over sites to determine what specialty crops are there.

A word about pesticides. "Pesticide" is an umbrella term encompassing all products that repel or kill pests. Under this definition, herbicides, rodenticides, fungicides, and insecticides are all pesticides. Producers who register their crops with DriftWatch® do so with the intention to provide protection from the full range of pesticides that can drift onto their site. Specialty crop signs may be purchased by registered producers and beekeepers.

DriftWatch® is sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Program. Information about DriftWatch®, BeeCheck®, and FieldCheck® is found at <https://ne.driftwatch.org>.