



## Roger Ort

- Owner at Ort Family Farm
- 45+ years in the Horticulture field
- Wife, Maria and 4 children.
- 600 fruiting trees planted, 3 acres of small fruit, 4 high tunnels and a commercial kitchen. Over 45 pawpaw varieties on trial.
- Edible plant nursery and herb farm





Ohio Pawpaw  
Festival





Pawpaw Festival-  
York County PA

# Native American Connections

- The pawpaw has been used by Native Americans for centuries for both its fruit and its medicinal properties. Many tribes, including the Osage and Sioux, ate the fruit; the Iroquois used the mashed fruit to make small dried cakes to reconstitute later for cooking. It is believed that the pawpaw's range is as large as it is because its growth was encouraged by various Native American tribes. (Food Print)
- Some archaeologists believe that the movement of Iroquois populations contributed to the dispersal of pawpaw north. (Jstor Daily)



# American Genetic Association

- But the big event in the pawpaw timeline came in 1916, when the American Genetic Association offered fifty-dollar cash prizes for the largest individual tree and for the tree bearing the best fruit. The contest attracted fruit from seventy-five trees across the country. The best-fruit winner belonged to a Mrs. Frank Ketter, of Ironton, Ohio.

Bill Heavey

# THE REGIONAL VARIETY TRIAL (RVT)

- In 1993, the PawPaw Foundation (PPF) and Desmond Layne, former Principal Investigator of Horticulture at KYSU, embarked on a joint venture to test within pawpaw's native range many of the commercially available, named pawpaw cultivars and PPF's advanced selections. Orchards for the Regional Variety Trial (RVT) were planted in 15 different locations from Fall 1995 through Spring 1999, each consisting of 300 trees. At each RVT site, 8 replicate trees of each of the 28 grafted scion varieties will be tested in a randomized complete block design. Named cultivars that are secured for testing include: 'Middletown', 'Mitchell', 'NC-1', 'Overleese', 'PA-Golden', 'Sunflower', 'Taylor', 'Taytwo', 'Wells', and 'Wilson'. The other 18 clones to be evaluated were selected from PPF orchards at the University of Maryland Experiment Stations at Wye, MD and Keedysville, MD. These "advanced selections" were selected based on superior horticultural traits including fruit size and taste, flesh-to-seed ratio, resistance to pests and diseases, and overall productivity on a year-to-year basis. Seedling trees from local native sources were planted around the perimeter as a buffer against edge effects and to allow comparisons with local germplasm. 15 Identical orchards will be or have been planted at the institutions and locations.

Kirk W. Pomper, Desmond R. Layne, and R. Neal Peterson



# Natural Habitat

- The Pawpaw, *Asimina triloba*, is the largest edible wild fruit native to the USA, occurring naturally in moist, shady places in most of the eastern half of the USA, from the Gulf Coastal plain to the Great Lakes, and from lower New England, to the edge of the southwestern plains. They are seldom found near the Atlantic or Gulf coasts. The Pawpaw's preferred habitat is rich, moist bottomland, but will also grow on other sites that are well~drained and sunny or partly shaded. Within their native range, they can be found almost anywhere from river bottoms to hill tops. The soil should be slightly acid (pH 5.5~7), deep, fertile, and well~drained. Good drainage is essential to success. Pawpaws will not thrive in heavy soil or waterlogged soil.
- Pawpaw trees will grow in USDA zones 5A through 9.

# Fruit Characteristics

- Most enthusiasts agree that the best way to enjoy pawpaws is to eat them raw, outdoors, picked from the tree when they are perfectly ripe.
- The unique flavor of the fruit resembles a blend of various tropical flavors, including banana, pineapple, and mango. The flavor and custard-like texture make pawpaws a good substitute for bananas in almost any recipe. The common names, 'poor man's banana,' 'American custard apple,' and 'Kentucky banana' reflect these qualities.



# Fruit Characteristics

- Pawpaw's beautiful, maroon colored flowers appear in the spring, and the clusters of fruit ripen in the fall. The Kentucky harvest season is from late August to mid-October. Ripe pawpaw fruits are easily picked, yielding to a gentle tug. Shaking the tree will make them fall off.
- Ripeness can also be gauged by squeezing gently, as you would judge a peach. The flesh should be soft, and the fruit should have a strong, pleasant aroma. The skin color of ripe fruit on the tree ranges from green to yellow, and dark flecks may appear, as on bananas. The skin of picked or fallen fruit may darken to brown or black.



One Green World



# Fruit Characteristics

- Fully ripe pawpaws last only a few days at room temperature, but may be kept for a week in the refrigerator. Ripe pawpaw flesh, with skin and seeds removed, can be pureed and frozen for later use. Some people even freeze whole fruits.
- Pawpaws are very nutritious fruits. They are high in vitamin C, magnesium, iron, copper, and manganese. They are a good source of potassium and several essential amino acids, and they also contain significant amounts of riboflavin, niacin, calcium, phosphorus, and zinc. Pawpaws contain these nutrients in amounts that are generally about the same as or greater than those found in bananas, apples, or oranges.



## **Jerry Lehman**

Terre Haute, Indiana  
“Only a couple of growers in the U.S. have pawpaw patches larger than the 350-tree plot that Lehman and his wife, Barbara, operate in southeastern Vigo County.” The Tribune Star





## **Neal Peterson**

Neal is a researcher  
of the world's most  
delicious varieties.  
Harpers Ferry, WV

Best Paw Paw Orchard: KSU's Research & Development Farm in Frankfort, KY



## Sheri Crabtree & Kirk Pomper

Kentucky State University has the only full-time Pawpaw research program in the world as part of the KSU Land Grant Program.



0:07 / 31:41





# Kentucky State University

- KSU PAWPAW PROGRAM

The Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) fruit has both fresh market and processing appeal, with a tropical like flavor that resembles a combination of banana, mango, and pineapple. Kentucky State University has the only full-time Pawpaw research program in the world as part of the KSU Land Grant Program. Pawpaw research efforts are directed at improving propagation methods, developing orchard management recommendations, conducting regional variety trials, understanding fruit ripening and storage techniques, and germplasm collection and characterization of genetic diversity.

- USDA NATIONAL CLONAL REPOSITORY FOR PAWPAW

Since 1994, KSU has served as the USDA National Clonal Germplasm Repository or gene bank, for *Asimina* species (Pawpaw), as a satellite site of the NCGR repository at Corvallis, OR. There are over 2,000 accessions (trees) from 17 states that are planted on 12 acres at the KSU farm.



## **North American Pawpaw Growers Association**

The North American Pawpaw Growers Association (NAPGA) in partnership with Ohio State University researchers invite pawpaw consumers and stakeholders to answer a short survey about your interaction with this fabulous fruit.

Our goal is to learn from all industry members, consumers included, and prepare educational materials to better serve the pawpaw community.





## Ohio Pawpaw Growers Association

The Ohio Pawpaw Growers Association, a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to educating pawpaw enthusiasts and commercial growers in successful pawpaw culture, production and marketing, to the preservation and study of wild pawpaw genetics, and to sharing delectable and nutritious pawpaw fruit with the public at large.



Pawpaw Orchard -Land, Air and Water. KY



Thank You!

Any Questions?