



Fruit Advisory Services Team LLP

Crop Technology Centre

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Fast School of Fruit Growing

With a combination of up to 35 years experience on a wide variety of farms, FAST's staff are ideally qualified to present these courses on how to grow soft/tree fruit successfully.

The courses are grounded in sound scientific principles to give attendees a thorough understanding of the fruit production cycle and how soils, the environment, management practices and husbandry techniques influence the yield and quality.

In depth explanations of the life cycles of the pest and diseases will enable course members to understand how current and future control measures can meet the objectives of growers and consumers.

As demand for UK fruit increases, the need to supply fruit over a longer season requires a good understanding of the influence on the different plant types, planting dates and growing systems for strawberries and blueberries, picking dates and storage conditions on top fruit quality and the production cycle and covering systems on yield and quality for stone fruit.

Our courses for

- **Strawberry**
- **Blueberry**
- **Cane Fruit**
- **Top Fruit**
- **Stone Fruit**

are developed for managers and technical staff in farms and businesses throughout the fruit industry

Modules will combine classroom and practical sessions at FAST's Crop Technology Centre, Brogdale Farm, Faversham. These modular courses run over 3 days (Strawberry), 1 day (Blueberry), 5 days (Top Fruit) and 2.5 days (Stone).

Accreditation of the School of Fruit Growing by Canterbury Christ Church University allows attendees to gain credits towards higher education qualifications. An additional fee is payable and further details are available on request.

You can choose to take individual modules or book for the whole course. For further information on the modules see over.

Accredited by:  Canterbury Christ Church University

All courses are Basis and NROSO registered where applicable
UKPRN: 10057035

Strawberry



Module 1

The Biology of Strawberry Plants

- Morphology
- Physiology
- Annual growth cycles of June Bearers and Everbearers

Growing Systems

- Description of soil and substrate based growing systems for strawberries
- Choosing the best system for individual farms
- The main factors influencing the success of different systems



Module 2

Integrated Pest and Disease Management

An outline of the major pest and diseases of strawberries to include:

- Identification
- Lifecycles
- Monitoring threshold levels
- Integrated control of major pests and diseases



Strawberry Nutrition

- Review of the role and function of the major and minor nutrients
- The effect of nutrition on strawberry plant performance
- Formulating and modifying feed programmes
- Interpretation of laboratory analysis

Module 3

Financials of Soft Fruit Production

- Establishment costs (structures, plants etc)
- Yields, returns and profitability
- Input costs
- Harvesting/Marketing costs & sale prices



Top Fruit

Module 1 - Soils and Nutrition

- Soil types & structure
- Managing soils
- Soil mineral content & availability
- Role of nutrients



Module 2 - Basic Tree Physiology and Management

- How a tree works
- Planting systems
- Importance of light, temperature & growth control
- Crop load & thinning techniques
- Pruning - summer & winter



Module 3 - Integrated Pest & Disease Management

- Pest & disease identification
- Life cycles
- The use of pest & disease models
- Reducing reliance on conventional pesticides

Module 4 - Financial Management

- Orchard planting costs for different systems & varieties
- Annual costs
- Profitability of different systems & varieties
- Explore the effect of 'what if' questions
- Simple investment appraisal techniques
- Monitoring financial viability

Module 5 - Harvesting & Storage

- How to maximise fruit quality
- Correct picking dates
- Managing the harvest from tree to store



Stone Fruit



Module 1 - Physiology & Growing Systems

- Physiology of stone fruits
- Tree management
- Varieties and rootstocks
- Growing & covering systems

Module 2 - Integrated Pest & Diseases and Nutrition

- Pest and diseases

Module 2 cont...

- Nutrient deficiencies
- Nutrient requirements
- Nutrient application methods



Module 3 - Financial Management (half day)

- Establishment costs
- Gross margins & cash flows
- Elements of profitable growing

Blueberry



Course outline includes:

- Blueberry taxonomy and breeding
- Growth and development, morphology, physiology, growth cycle
- Soil and substrate management including nutrition
- Field management and harvesting including pruning
- Pest and disease management



Cane Fruit



This course covers aspects of plant physiology, growing systems, P&D and nutrition that are more specific to raspberries and blackberries. *If you have not already attended the 3-day strawberry course, you may find it helpful to do so before attending the cane fruit course.*

Module 1 - Biology & Physiology

- Plant Structure
- Interaction with environment (day length, chilling etc)

Module 2 - Growing Systems

- Managing the growing environment
- Purpose and function of support structures
- Soil and soil-less systems
- Plant types

Module 3 - Pest & Disease Management

- Outline of the major pest & diseases of cane fruit:-
 - Identification
 - Lifecycles
 - Monitoring threshold levels
 - Integrated control



Module 4 - Nutrition

- Growth stage adjustment
- Typical feed recipes
- Common problems