



Penelope Perkins-Veazie  
Professor, Horticultural Science  
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Dr. Penelope Perkins-Veazie is known worldwide for her groundbreaking research on the nutritional and postharvest attributes of fruits and vegetables, and her findings have created new markets and production opportunities for a range of specialty crops. Currently a professor in horticulture at North Carolina State University, she received her B.S. from the University of Maine at Orono and her M.S. and Ph.D. in Horticulture from the University of Florida.

Dr. Perkins-Veazie specializes in the study of postharvest methods and storage technologies for fresh fruits and vegetables and assessments and screening methods for bioactive compounds in fresh produce. Her work includes developing storage methods to extend the shelf life of produce and assessing how genetic traits, production systems, and postharvest storage management affect the nutritional and market characteristics of fruits and vegetables. She has studied the cultural management, postharvest management, nutritional composition, and health attributes of more than 25 specialty crops, including niche produce such as radicchio, turnip, okra, butternut squash, and muscadine. More than 100 of her research papers have been published in peer-reviewed journals, and she has received more than \$2 million in funding from Federal, State, and commodity group grants.

Dr. Perkins-Veazie is particularly noted for her investigations on the nutritional benefits of watermelon. Her results confirmed that watermelon contains as much lycopene as tomatoes; lycopene is a powerful antioxidant that promotes cardiovascular health and helps protect against certain cancers. She also demonstrated that lycopene content in watermelon is affected by genetics, irrigation, and postharvest preparation, and partnered with colleagues on other projects assessing the nutritional qualities of lycopene in watermelon and watermelon juice. These combined efforts helped transform the profile of watermelon from mainly a dessert food to a functional food with significant health benefits, which greatly elevated its market appeal to producers and consumers alike.

In addition to her stellar research career, Dr. Perkins-Veazie is an exemplary educator, mentor, partner, and advisor. At North Carolina State University, she has chaired, co-chaired, or served on many graduate thesis committees, and her training has helped students excel in oral and poster competitions. She is frequently asked to speak at professional meetings in the United States and abroad. She has been recognized with various honors and awards, including Fellow,

American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS); ASHS Outstanding Researcher Award; Outstanding Paper Award, Vegetable Publication, ASHS; and President of ASHS, Southern Region. Her current editorial responsibilities include serving as Editor for the American Pomology Society and serving on the Editorial Board for Postharvest and Biotechnology; she is also an Associate Editor for ASHS and a member of the ASHS Publications Committee.

Most important, Dr. Perkin-Veazie's expertise and knowledge have provided a broad and needed perspective on the questions challenging scientists, agricultural producers, and commercial stakeholders. She has been an outstanding partner in finding solutions that bridge postharvest and storage practices and improving the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables with cultural strategies and management.