

Owning and Running an Orchard

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Discussion Topics

- Site Preparation and Planning
- Tree Selection
- Methods for Planting
- Maintaining your trees
- Harvesting and Storing
- Selling your Product
- References and Helpful Links
- Innovation in the Orchard

Site Preparation and Planning

- Sloped lands are preferable
- The higher the ground, the better
- Know your soil
- Shaded areas are not acceptable
- Fruit trees don't do well in wet ground
- Spacing of trees (Varies greatly)
- Keeping pests out of the orchard
 - Deer
 - Rabbits
 - Voles/Moles

Tree Selection

- Selecting fruit you want to grow
- Bare-root or balled trees for purchase
- Acclimation of desired trees to your climate
- Rootstocks
 - Size and Height of tree when mature
- Maturity of Fruit
 - Variety types should be selected so that you have fruit coming fresh every week or two (Important for Peach Sales)

Methods for Planting

- First mark your rows or trees prior to planting to ensure they will fit
- Shovel (Gloves Suggested)
- Tractor with auger
 - Requires 2 people for best results
- Tractor with tree planter attached
 - Used for large or commercial plantings

Maintaining your Trees

- This starts the moment you finish planting
 - Trees will require shaping (Stone Fruits and Pome)
- Weed Control
- Spraying your trees (what do I do, and what should I use)
 - Penn State Tree Fruit Production Guide (highly recommend this purchase)
 - Pheromones traps and deterrents
- Pruning – generally done in winter/spring
- Thinning fruit to obtain the right sized fruit at harvest

Harvesting and Storing

- When to harvest
- How to harvest
- How to store/keep stone fruits in refrigeration for longer storage
- How to store/keep pome fruits in refrigeration for longer storage

Selling your Product

- This one is tough
- Selling direct to consumer is the most profitable
 - Consumers at farm markets are the most tolerable for fruit that is imperfect
- Selling to wholesalers
 - Sold in quantities
- Selling to packing houses
 - Least desire-able
 - Prices can be $\frac{1}{2}$ of what you get from wholesalers and much less than to consumers

Innovation in the Orchard



Smart Apply by John Deere

- Reads the tree canopy and spacing and only sprays where it sees a mass

Innovation in the Orchard (continued)



Loppers for Bigger Cuts



Hand Pruners for Smaller Cuts



Pull-behind Air Blast Sprayer

Innovation in the Orchard (continued)



3-pt Air-Blast Sprayer

Innovation in the Orchard (continued)



400 Gallon Air-Blast Sprayer

Innovation in the Orchard (continued)

- Tractors have built in GPS, better cruise control, power steering and better turning radiuses
- Apple sorters have the ability to take 40 plus pictures of a single apple and determine if it is Xtra fancy or a lesser grade
- Implements are constantly evolving and improving
- Chemical industry is evolving where they now sell pheromone traps instead of actually applying an insecticide with remarkable results
- Broad spectrum sprays (kills many good and bad pests) are being replaced with targeted applications for specific bad insects

References and Helpful Links

- Tree Fruit Production Guide
 - <https://extension.psu.edu/tree-fruit-production-guide>
- Pa Fruit Tree Suppliers
 - <https://boyernurseries.com>
 - <https://acnursery.com>
- Chemical Sales
 - <https://nutrienagsolutions.com>
 - <https://www.helenaagri.com>