



Just Picked!

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Friday, November 5th near Madelia, MN

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From the Coordinator's Desk

Amy Bacigalupo

What a joy to talk with other fruit growers this summer at OFGA's farm tours. If you have not made it to one yet you still have time. Check Upcoming Events for details. Meeting growers from the Lake Superior region was a highlight of this summer for me. Everyone I talk with has a unique perspective, knowledge and interest in connecting with other fruit growers. That is why I am excited that OFGA is starting a strategic planning process in October. There will be many ways for you to share your perspective. I look forward to hearing from you.

Fruit and Nut Compass: A New Tool for Perennial Growers

By John Hendrickson, CIAS at University of Wisconsin

Given the up-front investment and significant lag time between planting, harvest and sales, it is crucial that growers consider all the costs of planting, establishment and management. For many unique and emerging fruit and nut crops, reliable, published, regionally specific crop budget data does not exist especially for organic producers. The Fruit and Nut Compass is designed to handle any and all perennial tree crops but requires that users do their own homework to enter data on costs, yields, and pricing for their unique location and circumstances. Getting a more precise estimate of the possible 'return on investment' can help both new and experienced fruit and nut growers make better decisions.

The Fruit and Nut Compass tool is a user-friendly, but comprehensive, method of tallying up startup or expansion costs as well as providing a structure to predict future marketing activities and sales. The compass is intended to be a workbench where growers who are serious about understanding the financial costs and risks of establish-

ing or expanding a perennial tree crop can explore and evaluate options. The Compass is in the very final stages of development and will be introduced this fall. Available now are several companion resources that were created as part of the larger research project including the short documentary video “Persistence” as well as Key Tree Crops factsheets (www.savannainstitute.org/key-tree-crops-2/). See an excerpt from the Black Current factsheet on page 3.

This decision support tool was developed by the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the University of Wisconsin in collaboration with the Savanna Institute through a grant from the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. The tool has been tested and modified in consultation with an advisory board of growers and agroforestry experts.

Stay tuned for its release! We are excited for the tool to be used by growers and farm service providers and welcome feedback on how the tool can be improved. For more information, contact John Hendrickson at the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the University of Wisconsin (jhendric@wisc.edu or 608-265-3704).

Grower Resources & Opportunities:

Need help managing your business?

The U of M is working to increase the number of organic farmers in the FinBin database so that they can develop benchmarks for fruit and specialty crop farmers. To do that they are offering scholarships for organic fruit and specialty crop producers to work with either a local Farm Business Management (FBM) instructor or work with a FBM instructor online via zoom. To learn more contact FBM instructors Kami Schoenfeld, kami.schoenfeld@mnwest.edu or Tricia Sauer, tricia.sauer@clcmn.edu. Tricia Sauer specializes in business planning and management of specialty crops including fruits and berries.



Relief Funding: CFAP update

USDA is implementing updates to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) for producers of agricultural commodities marketed in 2020 who faced market disruptions due to COVID-19. CFAP2 is direct payment program. Signup will close on October 12, 2021. More than 230 fruit, vegetable, horticulture, and tree nut commodities are eligible for CFAP 2 along with honey, maple sap, and turfgrass sod.

CFAP payments to specialty crop producers are now calculated using the producer’s eligible sales in calendar year 2018 or 2019. Please call the FSA office at your [local USDA Service Center](#) if you’d like assistance or have questions about applying for CFAP 2. A call center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.



KEY PERENNIAL CROPS

BLACK CURRANT

Ribes spp.

Requirements:

DRAINAGE: Currants are very adaptable, but do not tolerate standing water or heavy clay soils

PH: 5.5–6.5

LIGHT: Full sun to partial shade

ZONES: 3–8 (although some varieties hardy to 2)

Spacing:

IN-ROW SPACING (FEET): 2–3 feet

BETWEEN ROW SPACING (FEET): 12–14 feet

Timing

YEARS TO PARTIAL/FULL BEARING: 3–5 years

HARVEST SEASON: June–August

HARVEST HRS/ACRE: 770 (hand), 12–85 hours (mechanical)

Plant Selection:

Pure *Ribes nigrum* are susceptible to White Pine Blister Rust (WPBR). An outbreak of WPBR in the 1920's led to a federal ban on cultivating currants. Since then crosses were made with *Ribes ussuriense* to impart resistance. Early varieties had poor fruit quality (e.g. 'Consort', 'Cornet', 'Crusader'). Newer varieties show resistance to WPBR while retaining good quality and high yields (e.g. 'Titania', 'Blackcomb', 'Cheakamus', 'Stikine'). Although the federal ban has been lifted, some states still have laws on the books. Consult local regulations and select only WPBR resistant varieties.

Currants are easily propagated by layering or cuttings if not protected by patent.



ECONOMICS CASE STUDY

Potential for Ribes Cultivation in North America

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS: 2,200 plants per acre using non-organic chemical application. Cost estimates are for currants grown for juice production

ESTABLISHMENT COSTS

FIRST YEAR ESTABLISHMENT COST: \$2,278.50/acre

MAINTENANCE COSTS

ANNUAL VARIABLE COSTS: \$1,013.33/acre

YIELD AND PROFITS

YIELD PER ACRE: 4,047 lbs.

PRICE PER LB.: \$1/lbs.

REVENUE

ANNUAL REVENUE: \$4,047/acre

TOTAL REVENUE: \$101,175/acre over 25 years.

The Savanna Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to catalyze the development and adoption of resilient, scalable agroforestry in the Midwest US. We work in collaboration with farmers and scientists to develop perennial food and fodder crops within multifunctional systems grounded in ecology and inspired by the savanna biome. The Savanna Institute strategically enacts this mission via research, education, and outreach.



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SAVANNA INSTITUTE | INFO@SAVANNAINSTITUTE.ORG



Farmer-to-Farmer International Volunteer Opportunity:

ACDI/VOCA supports OFGA as an organizational member. We share a common mission of improving the organic production and marketing of fruit. Due to current travel restrictions, these assignments will take place remotely. The selected volunteer will collaborate with local business leaders, a local volunteer and ACDI/VOCA field staff to complete this assignment. The assignment will last for approximately 1 week for the selected volunteer, spread over 2 weeks when the local volunteer will be working with the host community. Communication and training materials can be shared via email, Zoom, MS Teams, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Google Meet or any other preferred platform. For more information or to review a Scope of Work, please contact Diana Shipman at DShipman@acdivoca.org or 202-469-6182.

Tajikistan: Greenhouse Lemon Production

Local farmers are requesting volunteer assistance to learn best practices in growing Meyer Lemons in a greenhouse. The selected volunteer will help the host farmer manage temperature, understand grafting and best fertilization methods, among other topics.

<https://volunteeropportunities-acdivoca.icims.com/jobs/5755/tajikistan--greenhouse-lemon-production/job>

Kyrgyzstan: Modern Nursery Management

The selected volunteer will teach farmers to get acquainted with international methods on nursery management, including promising commercial varieties, and the technique of pruning various fruit trees and berry bushes, including dwarf and semi-dwarf (rootstocks and seedlings) compatibility of the nursery rotation and disease prevention focusing on cherries and pears.

<https://volunteeropportunities-acdivoca.icims.com/jobs/5545/kyrgyzstan%2c-modern-nursery-management/job>



Peaches in high tunnel
Atoms to Apples
Mt. Horeb, WI
Rami Aburomia



Above & Below
Grandview Nursery and Orchard
Antigo, WI
Lisa Rettinger

Below
Apple wash line
Kalliroe Orchard
Montevideo, MN
Paul Wymar and Amy Bacigalupo



'That Duluth Grape'
Shubats' Fruits
Duluth, MN
Deb Shubat



Upcoming Events:

Friday, November 5th near Madelia, MN

Farm-Crafted Hard Cider Production

John Knisley of Tallgrass Cider and Alternative Roots Farm

Alternative Roots/Tallgrass Cider is an organic orchard and farm-crafted hard cider business. John will share information about the start-up expectations and costs for a cidery as well as tracking apples from the orchard to the glass.



About OFGA



The Organic Fruit Growers Association is a not-for-profit organization formed exclusively for charitable, scientific and education purposes. We share information and encourage research to improve organic production and marketing of fruit and represent the interests of organic fruit growers.

For more information, contact coordinator Amy Bacigalupo at ofgacoordinator@gmail.com

Visit OFGA on our website at <https://www.organicfruitgrowers.org/>

Or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/organicfruitgrowers>