SCF-ORGANIC FARMS, LTD.

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HERITAGE ORGANIC DRY FARMING PROJECT

Fruits and Vegetables

Heritage, Organic, Dry Farming … What Does It Means? Heritage (also referred to as Heirloom) plant species are vegetables, flowers, and fruits grown from seeds that are passed down from generation to generation, or they come from seed banks. Heirloom seeds are open-pollinated, meaning they rely on natural pollination from insects or the wind.

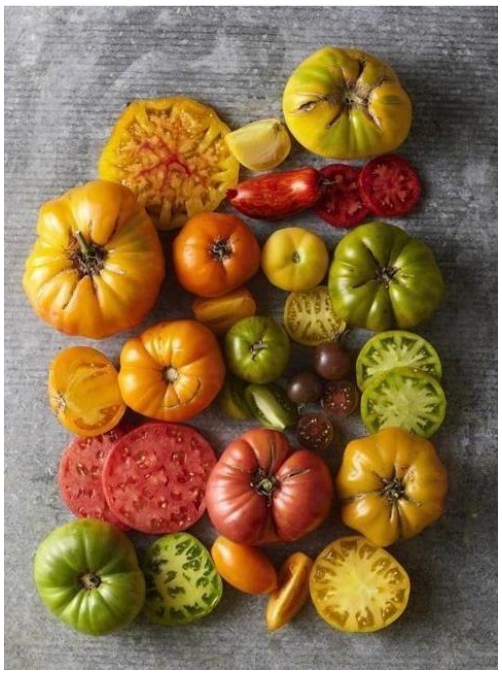
The word "organic" refers to the way farmers grow and process agricultural products, such as fruits, vegetables, and grains. Organic farming practices encourage soil and water conservation, as well as reduce pollution. Farmers who grow organic produce do not use conventional methods to fertilize, control weeds, or prevent disease among plants. For example, conventional farmers apply chemical fertilizers to promote plant growth; organic farmers apply natural fertilizers to feed soil and plants, such as manure or compost.

Dry farming refers to crop production during a dry season, utilizing the residual moisture in the soil from the rainy season, usually in a region that receives 20 inches or more of annual rainfall. Dry farming works to conserve soil moisture during long dry periods primarily through a system of tillage, surface protection, and the use of drought-resistant varieties.

Heritage, Organic, and Dry Farming systems are incorporated into sustainable agriculture often described as a way to grow food in a manner that does not have an adverse effect on the environment, that is healthy for the consumer, and the land on which it is grown, takes into consideration the health and welfare of the workers, which supports and gives back to the local community. Sustainable agriculture is not only about conserving, but preserving as well. As a rule of thumb, sustainable agriculture believes what gets taken out of the environment should be put back into the environment.

Tips for Growing Heirloom Plants: First, when attempting to grow heirlooms, don't save seed from hybrids as they won't produce the same plant as that of the parent. Vegetables which are mostly self-pollinators like beans, peas, peanuts, eggplants, tomatoes, peppers and lettuces are great choices for saving heirlooms seeds as they will duplicate the qualities of the parent plant. Since insects will on occasion pollinate these varieties of heirloom plants, they should be planted at least 10 feet apart.

Insect or wind pollinated heirloom varieties should be planted several hundred yards or so from other varieties, to prevent cross pollination. These include: squash, broccoli, beets, pumpkins,



corn, onions, cucumbers, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, melons, radishes, spinach, swiss chard, and turnips.

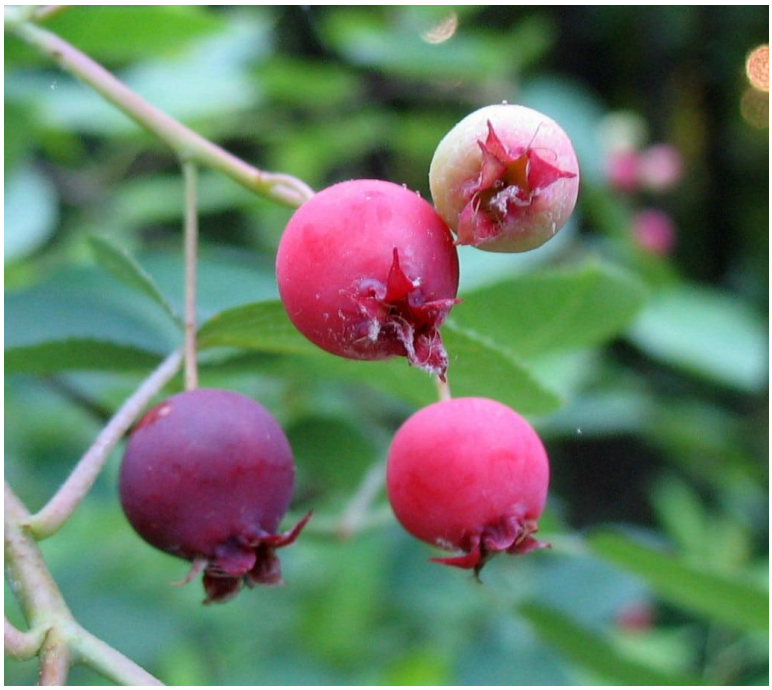
To completely preserve the quality of an heirloom, it's best, especially for the small home gardener, to plant only one variety of a species at any one time to prevent cross over. Heirloom vegetables may be grown separately in screened cages or individual flowers can be bagged and hand pollinated. Time isolation wherein the timing of the flowering plants is staggered may also be used to reduce cross pollination.

Choose the healthiest, most productive and tastiest plants to save seed from before harvesting the entire crop. Allow seeds to ripen prior to harvesting, as they are more likely to produce healthier plants. Then bring the seeds indoors to continue to dry. Label them clearly with the date and variety. Three to five years shelf life is ideal for most dry seeds stored in a sealed glass jar in a cool, dry area. Silica gel packs will aid in keeping the seeds dry and can be added to deter insects.

American Indians in South Carolina depended on indigenous trees for fruit production for thousands of years. Peaches and other mainstream fruit trees now overshadow these species, but natives still have a tremendous impact on wildlife and produce fruits tasty to humans as well. Since you're unlikely to find these fruits in a grocery store, you may want to plant a few native fruit trees in your backyard this year. In four or five years, one or two backyard mulberry or Chickasaw plum trees can provide bucketsful of fruit.

- Wild Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*). In bygone days in the South, wild black cherries were commonly used for flavoring - often for drinks of the hard variety. Today you can still stumble upon authentic black cherry jams and jellies in farmers' markets, but finding the tree itself are probably much easier, as black cherries are very common. In eastern South Carolina, wild black cherries often look scrappy and crooked, scarcely resembling the straight, towering form of cherries in the most elevated areas of the Upcountry. In higher elevations, black cherries can grow to one hundred feet in height, but in most parts of South Carolina they'll rarely reach half that. Black cherry trees produce lots of marble-sized fruit in June and July. Usually, birds such as bluebirds, robins, catbirds, mockingbirds and blue jays pick trees clean before the cherries fall. Black cherries are also an important food source for game birds such as wild turkeys, bobwhites and ruffed grouse. Although the fruit is edible, beware of black cherry foliage if you have livestock. Among farmers, black cherry is commonly referred to as "choke cherry." Cows and horses can become seriously ill after eating wilted black cherry leaves, which contain a high concentration of a cyanide compound. This poisoning is rare, but black cherry is a bad choice for pasture planting. For landscaping purposes, a cultivar of Prunus serotina called 'White Sparkle' blossoms prolifically and has a weeping form. Whether a cultivar or wild, black cherry grows best in full sun.

- Downy Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*). A small tree, usually no taller than twenty-five feet, serviceberry blossoms in early April. At about the same time, shad (fish) run upriver, which is why it is sometimes called shadbush. Since the showy white flowers of serviceberry bloom before those of many other plants, they are an important pollen and nectar source for honeybees and other insects. Like black cherry, serviceberry is a popular food for many bird species. Two months after pollination, the fruit of the serviceberry ripens in June (serviceberry is sometimes called Juneberry, as well), and birds devour the small, sweet fruits. The fruits of serviceberry are about the size of blueberries and can be eaten out of hand, used in jams and jellies or dried like raisins. American Indians used serviceberries in pemmican, a nutritious mixture of fat, nuts and dried fruits. Today, serviceberries are most commonly planted for landscaping. Amelanchier species - of which *Amelanchier arborea* is one of several native to South Carolina, but the only one capable of tree height - all have eye-catching flowers and attractive fall foliage. A cultivar of *Amelanchier arborea* called 'Autumn Brillance' has striking crimson leaves in fall. You can plant serviceberries in full or partial sun in a variety of soil conditions, ranging from heavy clay to sand.



- Chickasaw Plum (*Prunus angustifolia*). Although concentrated in Mississippi, the Chickasaw Indians also settled along the Savannah River in South Carolina. The so-called Chickasaw plum, *Prunus angustifolia*, thrives throughout South Carolina and was probably an important food source for many Southeastern tribes. At best a small tree, the Chickasaw plum is often shrubby, with dense, prickly branches. Plum thickets provide escape cover for birds, rabbits and other small mammals. Like many wild trees, Chickasaw plums exhibit massing behavior, in which heavy fruit years are followed by two to three years of scarce fruit production. Ideally, when a bumper year rolls around,

the tree produces more plums than the populations of birds and squirrels can eat, ensuring some plums are left over for germination. In a good year, a mature tree can easily produce two bushels of plums. Although tart eaten raw, these pink plums can be made into fine jams and jellies. Like serviceberry, the Chickasaw plum is a versatile species, capable of growing in a variety of soil conditions and full or partial sun. To keep a Chickasaw plum from turning into an unkempt shrub, prune when necessary.

- Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*). Black cherry, Chickasaw plum and serviceberry all belong to the same botanical family, the rose family. Pawpaw, however, is unique in two regards. First, pawpaw produces the largest fruit - up to a pound - native to North America. Second, although often associated with the South, and even memorialized in the song "Way Down Yonder in the Pawpaw Patch," pawpaw is actually the northernmost member of the tropical Custard Apple family. Species in this family are known for their banana-like fruit, and pawpaw, sometimes referred to as "poor man's banana," is no exception. A pawpaw resembles a stubby green banana and tastes similar to a mango. In the wild, pawpaws often reproduce through root sprouts, so individual trees are frequently interconnected through their roots. In South Carolina, pawpaw patches are common in the understory of mature bottomland forests. Pawpaw fruits are relished by mammals, including opossums, raccoons, foxes, squirrels and black bears. In addition, throughout the summer and fall, the zebra swallowtail, a beautiful black-and-white striped butterfly, lays eggs on the underside of pawpaw leaves, its preferred larval host plant. As a bottomland species, pawpaw prefers rich, moist soil and can tolerate partial shade. To attract pollinators and encourage fruiting, plant several pawpaws near one another, creating your own pawpaw patch.

- Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*). Because of the children's song "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush," many people believe mulberries are bush plants, when, in fact, mulberries grow on trees. Red mulberry, our native mulberry, is a fast-growing tree that can reach thirty to forty feet in height and live more than a hundred years. When ripe, mulberries are deep purple or black and look similar to blackberries. Like blackberries, mulberries can be used in jams or jellies, or eaten out of hand. Traditionally, mulberries were multi-purpose farm trees. They provided fruit for jams and jellies, and fodder for livestock, as farmers let hogs and poultry roam through forested areas. In addition, mulberry wood makes good fence posts, since it is slow to rot in contact with the ground. Today, mulberries remain an important food source for wildlife. More than fifty species of birds and many small mammals devour mulberries, often picking trees clean well before the juicy fruit fully ripens. A versatile plant, red mulberry grows well in full or partial sun and a variety of soils. Its classic, rounded form makes for a great backyard shade tree.

- Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*). Notorious for being sour, persimmons certainly are if they're the least bit green. However, a soft, well-ripened orange persimmon actually tastes quite sweet, and the Latin name Diospyros (meaning food of the gods) reflects this. Persimmon jams, jellies, whiskey and wine were common in the antebellum South. These days, you can find persimmon jams and jellies at farmers markets, but you'll have to search far and wide to find legal persimmon whiskey. Persimmons grow throughout

South Carolina and can become large trees given enough time and fertile soil. Persimmons, a dioecious species, need a male tree within the vicinity of female trees to ensure successful pollination and fruit set. Persimmon fruits ripen in late summer and early fall, and many people believe persimmons picked after the first frost taste better. If you wait that long, be prepared for slim pickings, as deer, opossums, raccoons and even black bears frequent persimmon trees loaded with fruit.

Late fall and winter are usually the best times to plant trees, and native fruit trees are no exception. Trees are dormant in cold weather and need less water, so planting during fall or winter provides time for roots to establish before the dry spells of summer. If need be, you can plant during the early spring - and garden centers sell lots of trees at this time - but you'll have to water more frequently throughout the first year. Resist the temptation to fertilize when first planting. By waiting, you'll promote root growth over foliage development.

Tips to Starting an Organic Garden and Orchard: Organic vegetable gardening is becoming more popular with each passing year, as home gardeners strive to grow gardens that are bountiful, healthy, and ecologically friendly. Starting an organic vegetable garden is fairly straightforward; here's what you need to know to get started.

1. Choosing the Right Site. Starting your organic vegetable garden in the right place will make a huge difference right from the start. You want a site that offers as much direct sunlight as possible -- at least 6 hours, and preferably 8, during your main growing season. If you don't have a space available that offers that much sun, don't despair -- there are crops you can grow without full sun. Does the land slope? You'll want to orient your garden bed to take full advantage of the sun exposure. Is there a depression where water collects? You'll want to think about filling this in with good soil so it doesn't stay soggy -- a site like that will take much longer to dry out in spring, and could result in rotted plant roots during the growing season. Is the site at the mercy of high winds? If you live in a windy area, consider trying to position your garden in a place that has a hedge, wall, or other structure nearby to reduce the effect of high winds. If you don't already have some type of windbreak in place, consider erecting strong trellises nearby to serve this purpose. You don't want to have to drag tools from the other end of your yard, and toting a watering can around isn't much fun, either. Make it easy on yourself, and try to situate your vegetable garden bed in a convenient place.

2. Soil Considerations. How is the soil in your potential veggie garden area? Is it rocky and full of tree roots? You may want to consider building a raised bed vegetable garden or lasagna garden. If not, then you could go ahead and double-dig the existing soil and try to grow there. Either way, it's important to assess your existing soil to see what you need to do to make it perfect for growing organic vegetables. You can send samples of your soil

to your local cooperative extension service for testing. Some garden centers and nurseries also offer soil testing services. This will let you know which nutrients are deficient in your soil and what type of soil you have, as well as provide suggestions for how to improve your soil. Follow the instructions you get back with your soil test in regards to any nutrient deficiencies or pH level issues. If you find that you have clay soil, there are some straightforward ways to improve it. Sandy soils benefit from the addition of plenty of organic matter, specifically, lots of compost.

3. Plants and Seeds. You'll want to start with organically-grown plants and seeds. Conventionally-grown plants are often already loaded with pesticides and chemical fertilizers -- exactly the types of things you're trying to avoid in your vegetable garden. Organically-produced seeds are harvested from organically-grown plants, never treated with chemical pesticides or fungicides, and never genetically modified. There are several good mail order companies that provide organic vegetable garden seeds. More nurseries, garden centers, and big box stores are also starting to sell a selection of organic seeds -- these are usually very clearly labeled as "organic."

4. Plant, Grow, and Harvest. Now that you've got the garden sited and the soil amended, the organic plants and seeds bought -- now it's time to plant and tend your garden. Look up information on the types of vegetables you want to grow to ensure that you're providing them with the right amount of water and nutrients. Consider doing some companion planting for a healthier garden. Pay close attention to your garden so that you catch pest and disease problems right away. The biggest part of growing a healthy garden is simply paying attention. If you do that, you're well on your way to a healthy, bountiful, organic vegetable garden.

Growing "clean" fruit organically can be a very difficult and elusive goal for growers, particularly in humid regions of the country. For those who wish to pursue a program of fruit culture that eschews dependence on chemical inputs (or at least uses less than conventional methods normally require) – here are some suggestions:

1. Natural organic orcharding begins with the soil. Eventually, your trees' roots may mine every square inch of your orchard ground in search of nutrients. When possible, begin a soil-building program before the trees are planted. And develop a long-range plan to manage and maintain the tilth of your soil. While building up the tilth and organic content of the soil can solve a multitude of problems, certain situations may require additional “inputs". Sometimes a comprehensive soil test will indicate a specific nutrient imbalance that needs to be corrected; the N-P-K paradigm seldom tells the whole story. Fruit trees can be very sensitive to mineral deficiencies. Supplements that provide major nutrients like calcium, magnesium, and sulfur as well as minor nutrients such as boron, copper, and zinc may bring about dramatic improvement in tree health and fruit quality. Compost teas, fish emulsion, and seaweed meal are all valuable sources of trace elements. These can be applied to the soil and/or sprayed as a "foliar feed". The latter approach may offer some extra benefits in increased disease-resistance and cold-hardiness.

2. Develop a sense of place - and understand its inherent virtues and limitations. Soil, climate, and microclimate will affect every decision. Once you determine what can be

expected to grow well - and what will be marginal, experimental, or impossible - you can make realistic choices. This learning process might entail trial-and-error planting, consultations with experts, as well as checking with more experienced neighbors.

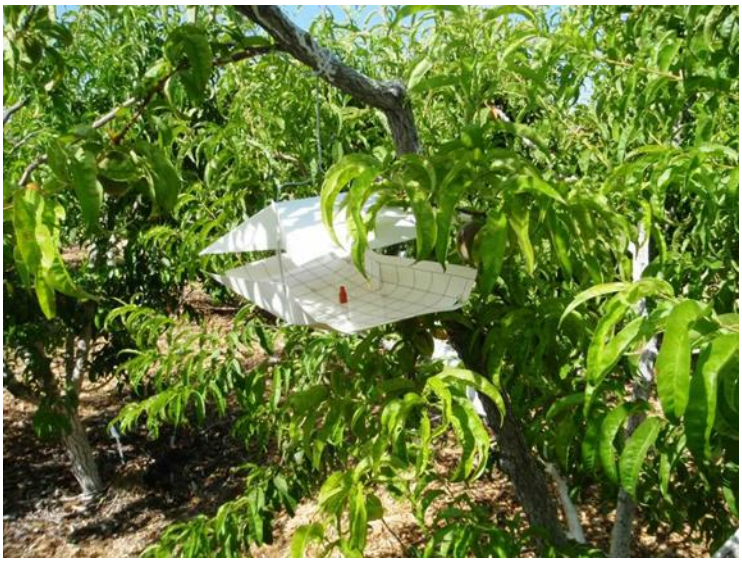
3. Start with healthy, well-formed nursery stock. Good tree structure begins at planting time. Unbranched one-year whips are obviously simple to deal with; a light heading back will encourage lateral shoot growth and stiffen the leader. Larger branched trees usually need to be pruned more heavily to compensate for any root damage and to promote a strong framework. Each branch should be spaced about 12 inches apart and oriented in its own direction, typically about 120 degrees from the adjacent branches. Damaged or poorly formed branches (e.g. bad crotch angles) should be removed now. The few remaining limbs are then headed back, perhaps halfway to the trunk - making the cut at an appropriate bud. Growth can be directed by pruning to outside, inside, or left/right buds. Later in the season, the tree should be inspected and re-pruned if necessary to insure that the most useful bud is continuing the growth of the branch.

4. Plant carefully and provide appropriate aftercare and protection. Planting depth and orientation toward the sun are also critical considerations. Too deep or too shallow will cause a multitude of problems later on. Newly planted trees should be given a solar orientation that minimizes damage from sunscald. Usually this means pointing the graft scar to the north so that the initial top growth leans toward the south. A slight tilt of the whole tree in this direction might be useful. In addition, a coating of whitewash or paint (white exterior latex) should prevent sunscald and the consequent girdling by flatheaded borers. It preys particularly on young, drought-stressed trees. Establishing your trees of course means protecting them from marauding mammals (deer, rabbits, dogs, rodents, etc.) Young trees that have been defoliated by grazing animals may never really recover their health and vigor - they are certainly more prone to sunscald, borers, poor structure, and stress-related diseases. Good fences, at least in the early years after planting, are an absolute requirement in most regions. Finally, we cannot over-emphasize the importance of adequate irrigation during those critical first years. Here in our area of the state, drought stress leads to stunted, weak trees that cannot support the weight their own fruit. And for young trees, this situation is yet another invitation to borer devastation. Figure out a schedule that provides deep regular watering - at least till the tree is firmly established.
5. Cultivate reasonable expectations. A misguided quest for superficial perfection too often becomes the justification for toxic sprays (This is called "clean" fruit.). Modern cosmetic standards for fruit may be somewhat unrealistic. With low humidity and no rainfall during the growing season, scab can blemish a certain percentage of fruit crops - depending on variety. At any rate, less than perfect fruit can make fine apple sauce and cider. Of course, some kinds of fruit are easier to grow organically than others.

6. Make informed choices for both variety and rootstock. Nowadays, fruit growers have many options to choose from, and these may include disease-resistant selections: scab and fireblight resistant apple varieties, fireblight resistant pears, peaches immune to leaf curl. Just make sure that you need this type of resistance. If a disease is not a real problem, then ordinary varieties may produce higher quality fruit. Also, it is useful to

remember that even the disease-resistant varieties are still susceptible to insect damage. Rootstock selection can be even more critical to the health and longevity of the tree. Natural vigor may require a taller ladder, but it often means a healthier orchard. Knowing your soil type and its drainage tendencies is an important consideration. Organic growers should also keep in mind that many modern orchard practices were developed in conjunction with a heavy spray program. So intensive (close) spacing of dwarf trees in trellised rows typically means more fungus diseases unless regularly sprayed. Likewise, many genetic dwarf varieties, especially peaches, have such a dense growth habit that disease problems are inevitable without chemical intervention.

7. Don't become so focused on the fruit that you forget the tree. Healthy fruit grows on healthy trees. Too many people seem obsessed about getting a precocious crop off of their young trees. This can lead to broken or misshapen branches and stunted trees. It is often best to strip off a premature fruit set to allow the tree to develop a strong, well-formed framework that can hold a crop year after year. Getting a young tree established during its adolescent period is crucial to long-term success. Judicious pruning and training means less remedial damage control later on. A properly structured tree will allow optimum air circulation and light penetration; this results in better quality, less blemished fruit. Too much openness, however, can lead to sunburn and borer damage. Again, it is recommended the use of white paint on young trunks when appropriate. Balanced feeding and watering is, of course, essential. The orchardist should carefully monitor shoot growth - both length and caliper - and adjust irrigation and fertilization accordingly. This requires some experience with "normal" growth rates for trees in a particular zone. Again, drought stress - and concurrent lack of vigor - can frequently lead to attack from the flatheaded apple borer. On the other hand, excessive watering and fertilizing - whether chemical or organic - can make a tree more susceptible to disease.

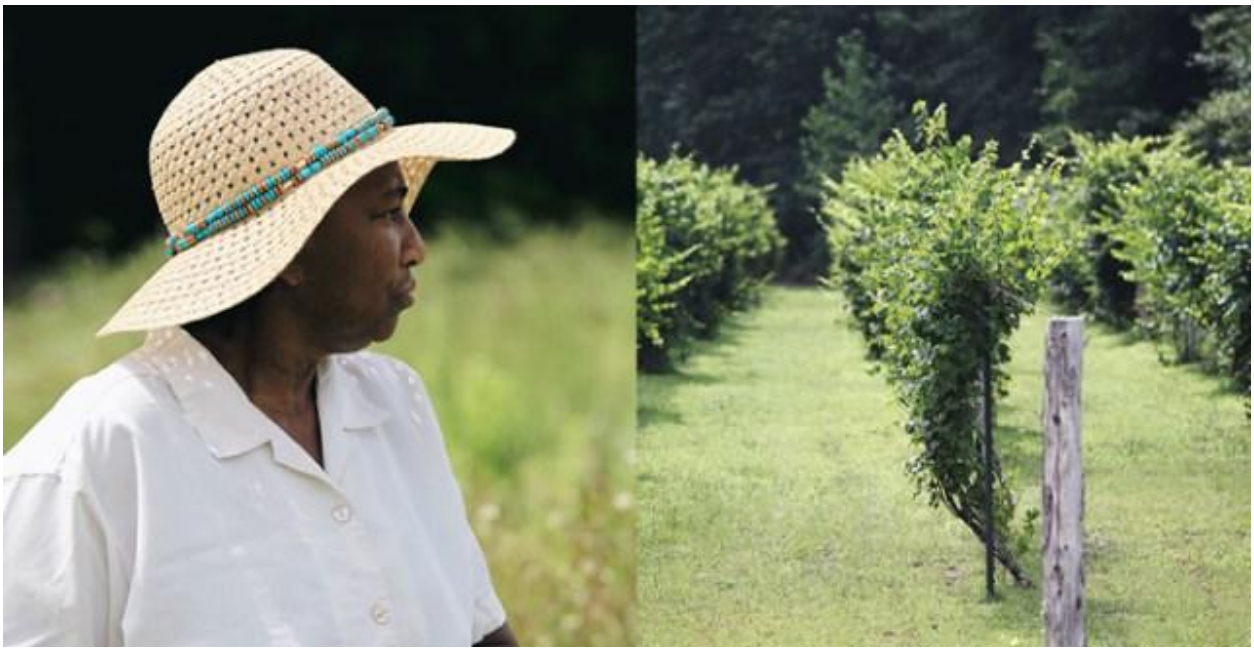


8. Learn about non-chemical methods of pest control. Timely spraying with oil and/or lime sulfur has long been utilized to prevent damage from both insects (mites, San Jose scale, aphis, and pear scylla) and diseases (powdery mildew and various scabs). For many years, organic practitioners have been developing "non-toxic" approaches to monitoring and controlling insect pests (e.g. apple maggot, codlin moth, etc.) Methods include trapping, releasing of predatory insects, and biological sprays. Timing is all important with any pest management practice, organic or chemical.

9. The value of Good Housekeeping in the orchard should never be underestimated. Sanitation can make a big difference with many diseases as well as insect and rodent pests. Windfall fruit allows pathogens and worms to winter over safely in the orchard. Likewise, fallen leaves can harbor disease spores and promote re-infestation in the spring. Raking and burning orchard debris - including all pruning wood - can really help. Pruning out diseased and dead wood is a vital orchard hygiene practice. Where fireblight is endemic, careful pruning with sterilized tools is an important element of control. Keep mulching material pulled back from your tree trunks, particularly in winter. Rodents (mice, voles, etc.) love to nest in this organic debris; the result is gnawed bark and possible girdling of the tree.

10. Balance human needs with those of the wildlife community, while safeguarding the well-being of the orchard. Natural orcharding is a beautiful ideal that offers inspiration and hope to folks struggling to grow fruit without doing harm. We are obviously not the only ones who delight in fresh, tree-ripened fruit. Many fruit gardeners are willing to share the harvest with other creatures, especially when there are no other realistic options. But when the animals in question damage and destroy the trees, even mild-mannered animal-lovers have been known to take up arms. One long-term sustainable approach to orchard protection is that good fences do make good neighbors of our fellow creatures. Building and maintaining an orchard fence that keeps out animal interlopers is a strenuous challenge. Yet there is no other dependable method - natural or unnatural - to protect the attractive nuisance we humans call the Orchard.

Dry Farming: Dry farming is not to be confused with rainfed agriculture. Rainfed agriculture refers to crop production that occurs during a rainy season. Dry farming on the other hand, refers to crop production during a dry season, utilizing the residual moisture in the soil from the rainy season.



Although dry farming is a technique that has been used for thousands of years in the Mediterranean regions for farming olives, grapes and grains, here in the U.S. there is evidence Native Americans on the Great Plains and in the Southwest practiced dry farming. Although settlers of European descent did not adopt the method until late in the nineteenth century, when increasing westward expansion necessitated it.

Dry farming is not a yield maximization strategy; rather it allows nature to dictate the true sustainability of agricultural production in a region. It can be describes as "a soil tillage technique", the art of working the soil; starting as early as possible when there is a lot of moisture in the soil, working the ground, creating a sponge-like environment so that the water comes from down below, up into the sponge. The soil is pressed down with a roller or some other implement to seal the top…so the water can't evaporate and escape out.

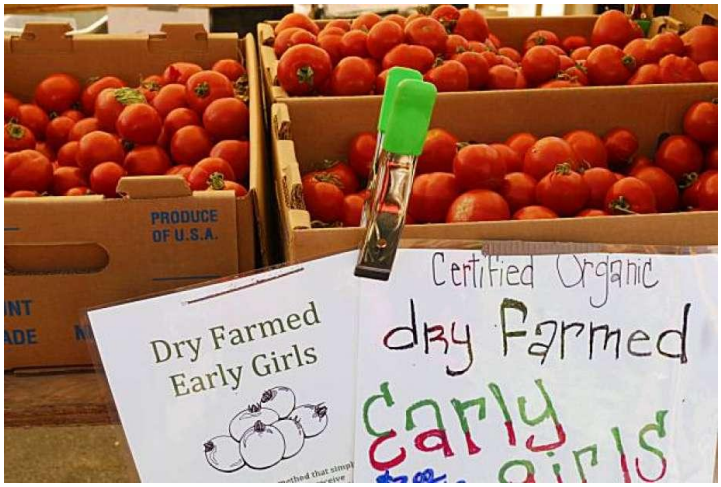
So, how does it work? Using a tillage technique as described, the farmer/gardener starts to work the soil as soon as possible after the last rain of the season. By disking (two passes) and using a roller, the goal is to have three to four inches of dry, even soil when cultivation is done. This is often called dust mulch or dust blanket and it traps the moisture in the soil.

In order for this technique to work, several key elements have to be present. The soil must have good water holding capability, which excludes sandy soils or heavily fractured soils. This technique requires a minimum of 10 to 12 inches of rain during the rainy season.

If the crop is a permanent crop, such as muscadine grapes or fruit tree crops, sufficient spacing between the plants is required to avoid competition for water and nutrients. Planting the appropriate rootstock for permanent crops is essential for dry farming in an orchard or vineyard.

Under the right conditions, the following vegetables, fruits and nuts can be successfully dry farmed in South Carolina: tomatoes, corn, pumpkins, watermelons, cantaloupes, winter squash, apricots, plums, pears, peaches, apples, various grains, red potatoes, pecans and walnuts.

The farmer/gardener has to be content with lower yields, often one-third of the yield expected from irrigated crops. Fruit and nut crops are often too small for produce buyers from large grocery stores and markets, even though they are generally sweeter, denser and store better than commercial grown products.



While dry farming is not for every grower or for every region in South Carolina, it could be a promising alternative system in times of uncertain water supply. Dry-farming requires not only sufficient rainfall but also soils capable of retaining moisture, so sandy soils or heavily fractured soils are inappropriate.

As additional benefits, dry farming:

- The "dust mulch" (i.e., the dry layer of soil that is cultivated to trap moisture) is dry enough that few weeds grow, so herbicides are unnecessary, or, for organic farmers, little weeding is required.
- Less water used on crops will have positive impacts on water quality and in-stream flows.
- The energy used to transport and pump irrigation water is eliminated.
- Establishment and maintenance of drip irrigation systems are eliminated.
- Better tasting, more densely nutritious products.

Asya's Organic Farms, is a family farm business. Shaheed Harris with daughter Asya and partner Yolanda, has made it their life's mission to help people get back to farming, gardening and a healthier lifestyle.

HIGHLIGHTS OF USDA

OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED AND VETERAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS

The Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers program, also known as the "Section 2501" program after its original Farm Bill section number, provides grants to organizations that work with minority and veteran farmers and assist them in owning and operating farms and participating in USDA programs. USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach administers the program.

The Section 2501 Program was established in the 1990 Farm Bill and has historically targeted funding to support farmers who are considered "socially disadvantaged" by USDA's definition. These include African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Latino farmers and ranchers. The most recent farm bill expands the program to also serve returning military veterans entering farming.

The purpose of the program is to assure that socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers have opportunities to successfully acquire, own, operate, and retain farms and equitably participate in all USDA programs. The program supports a range of outreach and assistance activities, including farm management, financial management, marketing, and application and bidding procedures.

Applicants are also encouraged to coordinate with existing regional projects to complement pertinent and relevant cross-regional activities.

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