

NC Alternative Crops and Organics

An outreach tool for Jeanine Davis in the Department of Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University to share information from her agricultural research and extension programs on organic farming, medicinal herbs, hops, truffles, and other alternative crops.

Thursday, April 15, 2010

About Me

We Planted Our Truffle Orchard Today



We had a great crew from the research station to plant the trees in record time. Thanks, guys!

Last spring Garland Truffles donated trees to my program to establish a test & demonstration truffle orchard at the Mountain Research Station in Waynesville, NC. The trees are filberts inoculated with the black Perigord truffle fungus. As you may recall, it rained a lot last spring and the soil never dried out enough to work it. So we potted up the little trees and held them for a fall planting. Same thing happened; it just kept raining. So we put the trees in an overwintering structure and held them till spring. Now finally, almost one year later, we have planted our little truffle trees. And they look great.

We don't have any research arranged for this small orchard yet. Right now it is a learning tool for us and a demonstration orchard to teach people what a truffle orchard is all about. We are looking for funding to conduct research studies on a wide variety of issues including disease management of the filbert trees, testing for the presence and extent of colonization of the fungi in the soil, and fertility management.



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I am a researcher and extension specialist with North Carolina State University. I'm located at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in western North Carolina. The objective of my research and extension programs is to help farmers improve the sustainability and profitability of their farms. An emphasis is placed on exploring new crops, such as hops, truffles, medicinal herbs, and organic farming. I am the coauthor of the book 'Growing and Marketing Ginseng, Goldenseal and Other Woodland Medicinals'. I am establishing an organic research unit at the Mountain Research Station in Waynesville this year.

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Close up of one of the trees. These are much larger than what you would usually plant because we potted them up and held them for a year.

- Garland Truffles. This is a North Carolina company. They sell inoculated seedlings and have lots of information on their website about growing and marketing truffles. They donated the trees for this project: <http://www.garlandtruffles.com/>
- The North American Truffle Growers Association. They hold winter and summer meetings where truffle growers and experts get together to share information: <http://www.trufflegrowers.com/>
- A few years ago, I would have listed the websites of several growers who are successfully growing truffles, but there are enough of them now that I'm afraid if I make a list I might miss someone and they'll get upset. So, I'm going to leave it to you to find some of these successful growers and read about their businesses. Just do an internet search on, for example, "truffles North Carolina" or "truffles Tennessee" or "truffle production". You will also find good information from Australia and Europe.
- Just be careful that you get your information and inoculated trees from reliable sources. Beware of websites selling truffle trees or services that do not include a name, address, or phone number. Putting in a truffle orchard is an investment. Before you buy trees from someone, you should be able to ask them lots of questions, talk to people who have purchased their trees, see real evidence that their trees can produce, and visit the nursery if you want to. Okay, I'll get off my soapbox now.