



Starting an Orchard

Posted by [Henry Jacobson](#)

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[Henry Jacobson](#)

[Starting an Orchard](#)

March 07, 2017 06:47PM

Hello Folks,

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 14

I am an 18 year old apple orchard enthusiast that wants to grow organic. Currently, I am enrolled at a community college here in Northeast Wisconsin going for Horticulture. I believe this may be the closest degree/major/diploma to starting an orchard other than a sustainable agriculture college out in Vermont. My family has a 20 tree orchard that I just added onto turning it into 35 trees so I have been experimenting with pruning, budding, grafting, and organic pest methods. I have even found a local apple variety that won ribbons/medals at World Fairs and am getting help from Dan Bussey of the Seed Savers Exchange for re-introducing it. I made another discovery a couple weeks ago that will prove to be beneficial. Anyways, how might I go about getting experience in all things orchard and purchasing land for a 30-40 acre orchard along with a small farm?

Thanks,

Henry Jacobson

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[Pat Pryal](#)

[Re: Starting an Orchard](#)

March 08, 2017 03:14AM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 76

I would suggest reading Michael's book "The Apple Grower" as a must-read for going organic. As far as the land, can't help you much in that regard, except to say that it needs to have well drained ground and not located at the bottom of a big hill. A 30-40 acre orchard is a huge undertaking. I'm assuming you are going to be growing a low density orchard?

Good luck and welcome aboard

Pat

Brampton Lake Orchards

Zone 4a Upper Michigan

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[Liz Griffith](#)

[Re: Starting an Orchard](#)

March 08, 2017 05:33PM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 46

Hi, Henry -

Sounds like you are well on your way. Pat's recommendation to read Michael's book is a great one. He also has two others that are must-reads. Joining this forum was also a wonderful idea; there is so much information to gain from these places alone.

Is your school near your family's farm so that you can continue to work in your orchard? If not (or even if so), is there another orchard near you where you could maybe work/intern while you earn your degree? Even if they are not completely on the same wavelength management-wise, getting out in an orchard and growing is the best experience, IMHO.

Land-wise I don't have much advice to offer you beyond keeping your ear to the ground and networking among farmers.

Best of luck! If you're ever in the Madison area, please let me know. You're always welcome at our place.

Door Creek Orchard

Zone 5a in Wisconsin

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Henry Jacobson](#)

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 14

[Re: Starting an Orchard](#)

March 08, 2017 06:52PM

Pat Pryal Wrote:

-
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 - > Grower" as a must-read for going organic. As far
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 - > density orchard?
 - >

Thanks for the advice! I do have The Apple Grower book and is very helpful with everything. I love everything that the orchardists did in the glory days about growing trees. I would want to grow a low density orchard just like the old timers. I like the idea of trees growing without stakes.

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[Henry Jacobson](#)

[Re: Starting an Orchard](#)

March 08, 2017 06:56PM

Liz Griffith Wrote:

Registered: 6 years ago
Posts: 14

-
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 - > please let me know. You're always welcome at our
 - > place.

I do still live at home and actually just pruned the apple trees up. There is are 2 orchards nearby, one I know that the guy uses pesticides pretty regularly and the other is family run. I was debating asking the family run one if I could work there but haven't gotten around to it yet.

Thanks for the invitation! I don't travel south much but when I do it is usually for a class or something related to learning.

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