



competitive colonization for skeptics

Posted by [David Maxwell](#)

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[David Maxwell](#)

[competitive colonization for skeptics](#)

March 15, 2014 02:39AM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 197

Michael touches on "scientific proof" in the [February 2014 edition](#) of the *Community Orchardist*, citing several commercial products' efficacy against fire blight and brown rot in support. As a scientist, I have no problem assessing the validity of these studies. Where I have more of a problem is when this is generalised as evidence of the benefits of the holistic spray program, with multiple relatively non-specific constituents (microbes, fats, azadiractin, seaweed, liquid fish). Has anybody subjected the "4-sprays" to any form of controlled trial? I am seriously considering doing so myself. Anybody interested in joining me? Note that I am not questioning that it does work - if Michael says it does, it must. But I am afflicted with a need to "know" as opposed to "believe". Science vs. faith, eh?

[Broomholm Orchard](#)

Zone 5b in Nova Scotia

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 03/15/2014 02:53AM by Michael Phillips.

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[Graham Savio](#)

[Re: competitive colonization for skeptics](#)

February 13, 2018 07:59AM

Registered: 5 years ago

Posts: 5

I'm just getting started with my orchard, but would be real interested in joining in on whatever scientific approach folks are applying to the holistic regimen. I already have faith that it works...but I'd love to help explore what exactly is making it work, which components play what role, etc. Is anyone already doing controlled trials? I'd love to check them out before I get started...

Willet, NY (Zone 5a)

100 semi-dwarf trees to be planted April 2018

(Farm name TBA)

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[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: competitive colonization for skeptics](#)

February 16, 2018 08:15PM

Moderator

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

I like how this thread has turned to *grower research for skeptics*. And roll with that I will!

Our original concept for **network research** featured grower committees charged with establishing investigative protocols. We made progress with a few (which you can find posted in the [portal library](#)) but to be honest this required a lot of coordinator effort to bring about. Few have time for committees. And perhaps even more to the point, few have time for grower research.

I'm a case in point. I deliberately planted three blocks of apples on land that offers little in the way of ideal apple ground. I made sure a sampling of the same varieties were in these blocks to make comparison trials somewhat simple. Sometimes I even do different treatments . . . but the requisite follow-up to get scientific about results just isn't there. Everything needs doing at the height off the season. I also have a personality quirk when it comes to a good idea . . . and that is once I believe a thing is the way to go . . . I tend to just up my growing game throughout all plantings. That admittedly leaves me in the subjective camp where you *know* the crop is better than before. These are the riffs that get shared in new books and the occasional newsletter. These are the riffs that skeptics never make their own because, well, they're skeptics.

Another part of the research plan concerns the [research pages](#) at the GrowOrganicApples website. These have been mostly idle for several years as hardly anyone reports in with their own inspired research. Again, few have time for this when push comes to shove. I get that. No worries.

Kudos to you Graham and others who do recognize we can take things further. I encourage it. These are the network tools we can engage anew. The protocols are really all about setting the stage so non-experts can dance a proper jig and maybe learn something for the rest of our community of health-minded growers.

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

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