



## do you care?

Posted by [Michael Phillips](#)

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[Michael Phillips](#)

[do you care?](#)

December 17, 2021 04:15AM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

Our fruit grower's forum has had powerful threads underway over the years. Providing an organic solution to unrelenting borer being high on the list! Yet activity for the past year or so has nosedived so I wonder how many of you actually still check in? Many who once participated have apparently fallen to the wayside. PLEASE HELP ME UNDERSTAND WHY. The "free software" we use for our grower's forum (made available by Phorum) is no longer supported so we need to pursue another option. Any recommendations? Most come with a monthly fee – which I think reasonable as there will be dependable tech follow-up. Dependable image sharing may also be possible. Yet the bottom line, obviously, is will enough holistic-minded growers actively participate? I've reached the point where I need real time affirmation that people care about these efforts, to be honest. That's great that some apparently prefer "likes" on Facebook but what about depths of understanding? I'm truly at the 50-50 point of keeping this going, to be honest.

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 12/17/2021 01:11PM by Michael Phillips.

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

[James Smith](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 17, 2021 05:03AM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 57

I do care, and I do check in on a daily basis. I've started a few threads, and commented on a few, but responses are sparse. I am active on another forum, not related to orcharding, and it gets scores of posts daily. It does have a fee to participate to aid in the costs of running the site, which includes a 'free' side. The 'free' side is similar to your HON site. It is supported by ads not non-paying members, paying members go ad free. Frankly, I would love to see HON have the level of activity, and I would post more here if I thought I wasn't talking to myself. I have been blessed to meet some fellow orchardists here in my area who generously shared scion wood with me, which wouldn't have happened otherwise. Since I don't want to plug the other site, I won't post a link here. However, if you would like to check it out, PM me and I'll share it with you.

I hope there is a future here.

Best,

James

Washington Okanogan Valley

Zone 6b

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

[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 17, 2021 01:36PM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

You hit the nail on the head, James! *Responses are sparse*. It does take away from sharing one's enthusiasm on an aspect of fruit growing if you are indeed simply talking to yourself. Not that everyone should have something to say every time. What I love about our more informative threads is the continuity, how one grower's insight coupled with a slightly different slant has helped more than a few of us grow healthier.

Anyhow, this is an informal poll of sorts to see who out of the 600 or so growers with participant accounts are interested in these efforts enough to reply. Most admittedly won't even see this as you need to check the [portal page](#) for recent activity on occasion. We can definitely keep our phorum version up and running, if only for its archival value. Yet for me to undertake a switch to new software — with the definite assistance of our paid webster — means committing a considerable chunk of time this winter. And thus I ask the provocative question: Who out there cares if this forum effort continues?

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

[Reply Quote](#)

[Claude Jolicoeur](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 19, 2021 07:47PM

Michael Phillips Wrote:

- 
- > And thus I ask the provocative question:
  - > Who out there cares if this forum effort continues?

I agree Michael this is a very difficult question.

For some unknown reasons this forum obviously never had the traffic and volume of discussion that you had hoped for when you started it. And this questioning as to why is it that way came to surface every once in a while - and never with a satisfying response.

For my part, I admit not participating much. The main reason is that I am more active in a cider-centric forum for which I feel more affinity. Also my approach of orcharding (which I could call a controlled "do-nothing") requires much less interventions than your approach and many of the topics here about spraying and methods of control for certain pests simply do not touch me.

I do check the Portal page about every second day, only to find most of the time that nothing new has happened. Evidently, this erodes one's good will. Maybe there simply isn't a critical mass?

Anyway, to answer frankly your question, if the Forum ceases to exist, I wouldn't miss it much. For a long while I haven't been able to access it, and only recently I have been able to solve this problem and come back - but this showed me that I could live without it. However I would definitely prefer that it remains active...

Claude

P.S. thank you for your huge effort of putting this up and running it for all those years.

[Jolicoeur Orchard](#)

Zone 4 in Quebec

Author, [The New Cider Maker's Handbook](#)

Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 12/19/2021 10:54PM by Claude Jolicoeur.

[Reply Quote](#)

[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 20, 2021 01:01AM

Registered: 4 years ago

Posts: 211

Quite apart from the benefits I personally get from accessing this forum, we really value being able to point inexperienced customers who buy our apple trees to the forum. Even though they don't post to it, they can read through the threads and this helps to take the heat off of us, as far as having to answer all sorts of basic growing questions. Also, since part of the goal of the HON, I believe, is to promote understanding of and appreciation for holistic orcharding, the forum is a great way for the public beyond current participants to get a taste of what holistic growing entails, practically speaking.

I know that the non-participation issue comes up on almost an annual basis, and I understand that the necessity of funding new software for the forum has pushed this to a head, yet a lack of active participation at any given time doesn't particularly trouble me. A big part of the forum's value is being able to read through past conversations. A lot of questions I might have asked are answered by searching old threads. One possible explanation for a lack of participation: there is a ton of valuable content in this forum already, allowing for research without having to chime in or start new threads. I understand the desire to see more active participation, but I don't want people to feel pressured to say anything if they don't really have anything to say or don't feel qualified to contribute just in order to "save" the forum -- empty chatter just means more stuff I have to sort through to get to relevant info.

I'm not looking at any kind of participation stats dating back years, but it sure seems like I participate more in the forum, refer more to the forum, and notice an uptick in others participating more after January hits every year. Typically, that's when we all have more downtime and are actively engaged in evaluating our past orchard year and planning for the new one.

I think the actual cost of the new software would be a very relevant point to consider here. Are we talking ten bucks a month or a hundred? Will funding the cost of the new software significantly impact other HON expenditures? While a show of enthusiastic hands in favor of the forum may help motivate, whether or not to keep it going may be a more appropriate consideration for the HON advisory board in the end.

I'm enthusiastically for keeping the forum going. If however, a decision is made to discontinue it, I would hope that these conversations would still be available for access in archived form.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

[Reply Quote](#)

[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 20, 2021 04:56PM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

We're absolutely going to keep our "Phorum-style" forum up and running as long as more significant glitches don't catch out the unsupported software. We're several years into this issue and mostly doing okay. And it isn't even the monthly fee of \$25–\$50 (the usual economy range) to tap into an active service. Rather, it's the personal effort of setting up a new site and transitioning the archives to that new format. We can certainly budget for the tech aspect of this move, noting there's some significant unknowns. I put in a hundred hours (and likely more) last winter writing revamped copy for our parent site, and admittedly still have several important curriculum articles and those pivotal research pages to revise and post anew. So right now, looking at the minimal responses to this informal poll, it strikes me that leaving things be is going to be the plan.

Another part of this story is my having to play the role of prompter. Say an intriguing post gets made . . . often I will then write different growers if they would please, please take a few minutes and add their insight. And about a third of the time someone does! You all wouldn't know that this happens behind the scenes but it's yet another indication to me of too many grower friends—that I certainly respect highly—just not having interest in this *type words onto the screen* approach. But if more of us were to check the portal every few days, like Claude, lordy, we would jumpstart our collective understanding!

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

Edited 3 time(s). Last edit at 01/05/2022 02:09AM by Michael Phillips.

[Reply Quote](#)

[Peter Drevniok](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 22, 2021 03:26AM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 31

Hi Michael,

Oh yeah I would miss it a ton.

Im sure it is a lot of work but I have learnt so much.

I dont post that often mostly because I think my queries and concerns might appear trivial or have been addressed before.

And the fear of looking stupid I guess.

Anyways I for one will do more and will gladly financially support this forum.

Peter Drevniok

Wakefield, Quebec

zone 4b

[Reply Quote](#)

[Ian Graham](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 22, 2021 09:49AM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 59

Hi Michael, I get a notice in my email when new posts arise, but this one in Just Talk didn't arouse my curiosity; the email doesn't show what it's about. so I am glad I came on tonite at 1:30 am after studying Dan Brisebois's course Farm Spreadsheets for All Seasons. It's a deep dive, and I'm in far enough that I don't want to pack it in.

That's to say that I do spend time on the screen learning. Im a hobby orchardist to be frank, it costs mightly to grow fruit without chemicals and there is lots of time too. That said, it's one of my fav areas of interest as you know, I consulted you on the meter last season for several months.

I find the archives valuable mainly because I dont know \where else to go for this information.

I would pay more, say \$100 a season to maintain the site and also a one time fee to cover the conversion to a new platform.

I'm following Michael Kilpatrick's GrowingFarmers.com course packet called Small Farm University, and pay a monthly fee of around \$40 bucks, annual and lifetime options exist too.

He is a house-on-fire marketing and social media whiz in addition to being a good experienced market gardener. Maybe you should chat him up on the fruit and orchard site of local healthy food. The movement has some great players now, and the software is out there to make it super easy to produce user interaction.

As far as Phorum is concerned, I like the format of the platform, tho dated now showing it's listserv roots. Yes not putting pictures up easily was a gripe.

Maybe it is time to lay down this particular community building mission of yours, heaven knows you've been steadfast for decades with three books, speaking tours and site visits to feed forward your research and experimentation. I 'll be sad if you do, but that time will come in due course as always.

To you and the small cadre of experience organic orchardists who posted often and at length, I speak my heartfelt thanks.

Old 99 Farm and permaculture site  
Dundas ON 5b

[Reply Quote](#)

[Cedar Hannan](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 22, 2021 03:53PM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 4

I find the archives and ongoing conversations incredibly useful. I check the Portal page daily, and to your point, it's not too hard to keep up with new posts these days.

I don't participate much because I don't feel like I have a lot to offer, with all the experienced growers on the site. I will probably never be the one to be pushing the boundaries of growing techniques and science and so I don't see this changing. If there were a category specific to cider making, I might have more to offer in the way of experiences, but it could be that this is not the right place for those conversations.

So, to echo previous sentiment, I'd be very sad to see the forum go, and greatly appreciate the body of knowledge it currently represents.

Wildbranch Cider

[www.wildbranchcider.com](http://www.wildbranchcider.com)

Zone 4a in Vermont

[Reply Quote](#)

[Mike Biltonen](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 22, 2021 10:04PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 298

Hi,

I have to admit that I would hate to see this phorum fall by the wayside. Yet the lack of involvement and input from others (we know you're out there) is discouraging. As a source for archived material its great. But for active ongoing discussion it has pretty much stagnated. Given that consulting is my business and that providing information and feedback here is "free of charge" - I don't expect nor do I get anything monetarily - the least I could expect is participation, even pushback. Maybe we need some really juicy controversial subject matter? I am not sore about it, but it does limit my desire to start new threads or respond to requests for information. Michael P has certainly done everything he can do for the community; now it is up to the rest of us. As it is, the web site is functional but not incredibly easy to navigate. I do think that upgrading the system to a more "modern" format and aesthetic would be great and I could even see donating some dough to the fund to do that. In my experience though any serious upgrade would cost at least \$3000-4000, and that would need to be raised or pledged first. Then if the participation remained the same, we would all ask ourselves if it was worth it. What say ye, folks?

[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

[Reply Quote](#)

[Craig Bickle](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 23, 2021 01:08AM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 82

I care a lot! I'm probably one of the newest growers on the Phorum, and have found the site to be an invaluable source of information. I'd post more but I only have limited access to internet all but a couple days a week. And as someone else said, I feel like I'm more a reporter on what I'm trying with my trees than an experienced farmer who can recount years of efforts, some that worked and which ones didn't. So I've taken a back seat lately and followed along without chiming in.

But I'd be glad to pipe up more often if participation is wanted. I'd also be happy to kick in my share of the cost for keeping a resource such as this going. That's probably good enough for now if you're looking for feedback/votes, Micheal. Please, count me as an enthusiastic "Yes!!"

Craig Bickle

Hap Woods

Zone 6a

East-Central Ohio

[Reply Quote](#)

[Nathan Parker](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 23, 2021 09:08AM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 4

I care! I also am a new orchardist and have found so much good information here. It's the only resource I know of where I can find real discussion among growers that have experience. Invaluable! It is somewhat cumbersome to navigate sometimes but I think that's what you get with free software. I am sorry to hear participation is going down, I am just getting started and would hate to see it go away. I hope to be a regular contributor once I feel like I have enough experience to provide some insight.

Nathan Parker

Fiona's Apples

Zone 7b - Northern California

[Reply Quote](#)

[Shane Patrick](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 25, 2021 04:02PM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 22

Please make another mark in the "Care" column. As mentioned by others above, I'm new to this and don't really have much to contribute yet. I did have an idea recently that i bounced off the forum and received answers that i doubt could be received elsewhere. This is where one finds solutions of the unorthodox variety. If i ask my co-operative extension or neighboring conventional growers, answers are always of the "Better living through chemistry" or "Rip out and replant" variety.

I can appreciate how carrying the torch makes one's arm ache. I hope you find the energy to keep going and someone in the next generation steps up to help you keep the fire burning.

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

[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 26, 2021 06:23PM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

I'm delighted to see more voices join the fray. The forum format we have now will stay "live and inspired" noting any such effort needs occasional activity to sustain interest. Let me share a few more numbers about the situation.

Out of the nearly 600 growers with approved accounts, let's say a third have posted at one time or another. Why the others never got out of the starting gate is unknown to me but it's not due to tech issues. Currently I would guess there's maybe two dozen or so who check in somewhat regularly, this simply based on 11 us responding to this "poll" and there being 171 hits over the nearly ten days since ongoing replies began. Another number you can find on the [portal page](#), bottom right corner, reflects views of that page each day—and often tops a hundred by the end of every twenty-four hour period. While that sounds promising, it turns out much of that activity are bots looking for an opening to wreak havoc. (Ours is a weird world!) All this aside, it still comes down to the expectations of anyone making a post who rightfully hopes to engage meaningful conversation. An unanswered query or two are all it can take to dampen that grower's enthusiasm... which is one way we lose people. I've also been told there's been some condescending responses which has caused more sensitive people to withdraw. Admittedly that's not necessarily easy for moderators to perceive nor are we always successful in the background trying to keep things orchard-focused... but we do try!

Mike's comment about supporting these efforts financially is spot on. Ten of us engaged in this particular conversation have indeed become [members of the network](#) and it's that public radio step which makes possible the budget to get things done. Like investing in the move to a new forum platform with real-time tech support. This is something I will be presenting to the advisory board in the new year, among other work needing to get done. Our funding increased in 2021, due to significant legwork on my part to achieve the parent site revamp, all of which has been reported annually in what I jokingly refer to as [the boring bit](#) going back like fifteen years now.

Anyhow, it's time to get back to some genuine orchard posts, eh? I for one am very interested if anyone else has started working with [plant sap analysis](#).

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/03/2022 04:32PM by Michael Phillips.

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

[Eliza Greenman](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 27, 2021 02:46AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 23

Hi,

Now that I've signed up to receive emails and responses from HON, I do read them most of the time. So there is that. However, as someone who is self employed in this realm, I totally struggle with the question of "Should I spend my time answering this for free?" And most of the time, when I ask myself this question, I freak out a little about all the things I should be doing instead of reading a forum- and abandon it all together. This is equal parts ADD and having too much on my plate.

I'm also struggling with how I can better relate to the forum given my agricultural eccentricities. In order to get more out of it, I'd need to put a lot more time in and I'm afraid of making that promise to the tune of \$600/year in web space. And to be honest, i'm getting to the point where I'm more so inclined to call someone up to talk about it (via wearing headphones in the field) than sit in front of a computer these days due to time constraints. I'm not sure that a forum is my best participation medium, nor social media (which I've limited myself to 10 minutes a day). This is a shame, because that conversation is then limited to 2 people, unless I decide to write it on my blog or something.

With all that said, I do work in archives all the time and I'm thankful for archived works like this. I often spend a bunch of time trying to find if someone is still alive to ask them questions about something they wrote 20 years ago, with most of that effort unrewarded. In moving forward, at the very least, I think these exchanges should be saved in a publicly searchable way. As for my future collaboration in the forum, it will probably remain spartan until I can find a way to communicate to a potential mass of people that is easier.

I really appreciate all the work that has gone into this forum. Thanks to everyone, especially Michael.

Eliza

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

[Prairie Sundance](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

December 27, 2021 01:28PM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 47

I first checked out HON shortly after buying "the holistic orchard," at that time it was over my head and I didn't check back in until we were in the serious planning stages of our young orchard. I immediately got to exploring the forums, trying to post where I felt I could without too many self-conscious thoughts re my naivety, as Michael had urged. I checked the portal every few days, and ended up reading most of the archives as time permitted. I spent 6-8 months checking in at this frequency before the lack of new posts and conversation led me to slow down. I sometimes wondered if all the good posts were somehow only accessible to the cool kids with the secret tattoo. I now check in monthly or so, but will gladly do so more often if there's more activity, though frankly, I don't have anywhere else to go.

What a valuable resource! More than once after reading an eye-opening post I have told myself, "that's worth the price of admission!" However, as a low-income family on the front end of a lot of expenses, I have yet to give a dime to HON. I guess at the same time I've also been telling myself that I'd begin chipping in when we sold our first apple- 2022?2023? I do appreciate that this is an advertising-free environment, so I guess I'll put this post as my pledge to support if you decide to move forward- both with words and bucks.

At the same time I also understand the feeling of wondering when it's time to pull the plug after seeing great effort go into diminishing returns- our rotating community work party here has been at a similar place since COVID. Wherever you end up on this one, I get it!

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 12/27/2021 01:38PM by Prairie Sundance.

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

[Sam Lindenmuth](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

January 02, 2022 12:21AM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 7

I do care. I just find most times I don't have much to add or say. Wonderful resource to read up on things going on about the orchard. I find a lot of answers to my questions here.

Blackmore Farm

Hawley, PA

Zone 5b

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

[seth jones](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

January 04, 2022 05:52PM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 12

I definitely care! (Though the time it's taken me to respond might belie that statement). It's all about bandwidth for me. As a solo orchardist/cidermaker/ciderseller I am usually just putting out metaphoric fires in the orchard. I rarely have time to ponder larger issues or peruse others' threads but am so grateful to those that do that work. I often hit the HON oracle archive to look for a specific answer to a pressing question or issue. Case in point: In looking for a sprayer upgrade I made the right choice after consulting a thread on this list.

I am at best a journeyman fruit grower and don't really feel I have a lot of advice to contribute to a thread. Or to start one. I'm more of a leech member! I have donated in the past, though not for a couple years, but am glad to do it again.

Being a fruit grower is often a lonely business and the sense of community this sustains is invaluable. Michael, I hope it's worth your time to continue it but totally understand if it's too much. Either way, thanks so much for all your work- here and elsewhere!

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

[Andy Brennan](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

January 05, 2022 07:04PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 10

What are you, my Jewish Grandma? "Do you care?"

Well, yes, but because as an orchardist I'm in the same boat as Monsieur DuNothing up there, I don't typically engage in practical information discussion and I'm absent during the growing season. But being American and valuing other people's opinions (just joking, you know I love you Claude), I would say I definitely care if this forum went kaput. Even if I don't use it much, like the CiderDigest, we all **need** for non-institutional, non-commercial discussion to exist! These grassroots circles are the only thing keeping this planet from becoming Amazonized and/or government regulated (who pays for all that University research?)

This is SO MUTHA IMPORTANT, that I, a humble serf in Lord Burr's stables, will cough-up the shillings. I just wish you had police to remind me to check in and contribute more often!

xoxo

Andrew Brennan  
Aaron Burr Cidery

-  
Wurtsboro, NY  
Lower Hudson Valley  
Zone 5a

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

[Steve Dagger](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

January 09, 2022 03:29AM

Registered: 9 years ago  
Posts: 28

A bit late chiming in here since I am one of those intermittent, infrequent users. I estimate I've visited the grower's forum maybe 30 times in the 6 years I've been a member and have posted around 6 times when I felt I had something to offer to the discussions.

After reading thru all the posts to date I don't have anything new to add other than my personal desire to see the forum continue and my willingness to continue financially supporting HON and any ongoing efforts to keep it "non-institutional, non-commercial".

[Pommes de Terre Acres](#)

USDA Zone 5 - Dixon, Montana  
Intermountain West Region

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

[Robyn Bipes-Timm](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

January 30, 2022 12:50AM

Registered: 3 years ago  
Posts: 7

Similar to some of the responses above, I do care and the forum has been excellent and helpful to me. I read often, inconsistently throughout the year (much less in the fall-early winter) but if there was a way to track reading I would imagine you could see quite a lot of reading activity going on. Yes I see the problem of low engagement and responses which can be deflating. As a relative beginner I feel I don't have much expertise to offer, and am early in the "trials" and pilots I'm doing on my own very small 40-tree orchard. If the forum continues, I would hope to have something more to offer as my experience grows. I would be happy to pay for ongoing access to the site.

Robyn Bipes-Timm

Wisconsin above the Mighty Mississippi  
Zone 4b

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

[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

January 30, 2022 02:17AM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago  
Posts: 621

Just want to point out we are three posts away from what I consider to be a *forum trifecta*. And that's to look on the [portal page](#) and to realize that the sixteen most recent threads with activity (shown in the Forum Categories box) occurred in the month at hand. We're rocking it, fruit growers!

I also appreciate the pledges of support. That begins on our [grower-member](#) page. This is how we pay the bills and keep on trucking.

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

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

[Charlie Showers](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

February 03, 2022 10:04PM

Registered: 2 years ago  
Posts: 18

Hello Michael et al,

As an establishing commercial biological orchardist I have found this forum genuinely invaluable, even if I am on the other side of the world with different bugs and seasons.

I don't engage with much online and like many of us here would prefer to be outside than inside....but.... sometimes when I'm stuck, curious, despondent, ready to chuck it in etc I drop into the forum for an elixir of wisdom, motivation, solidarity and an all round pep me up.....but.... this is my first post, why is that? I'm relatively new to orcharding at scale, what insight could I possibly provide compared to the more seasoned orcharding folk? But that's silly thinking, there's plenty of new orchardists, like me, reading here who would equally benefit from the experience of others as they make their way through orchard establishment. So Michael you've encouraged me to start interacting, it's time I valued the lessons I've hard won and gave my bit.

This forum has made a difference to me and I want it to continue for not just my sake but for the next new orchardist too and I need to take some responsibility for that. I care!

[Black Barn Farm](#)

Zone 8b in Victoria, Australia

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

[Jon O'Donnell](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

February 08, 2022 04:58PM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 8

To be honest, I have become very discouraged by this forum over the years. I have about 40 fruit trees now and a large garden, all managed under "deep organic" principals. You Michael, through your books, have been my orchard guru. But the activity level on this site is so low, and responses to comments so sparse, that I have largely turned my attention elsewhere. I now check this forum every few months. In contrast, I check another fruit growing forum daily, even though most of the participants are conventional growers. There's enough content there to get some useful information even if I have to filter out the majority of the posts. I also spend hours a day on YouTube learning about various hobbies including orcharding (although again, there's not much there on deep organic methods).

It's sad to me bc I feel like I've only begun to understand the orchard, and there's so much more to learn, but I have exhausted all the written information I can find. Without an active community I'm forced to figure out the rest on my own. With a garden, every year is a clean slate. With an orchard, the investment in time and money is so large, the prospects of failure (which are great) are daunting, and perhaps discourage all but the most committed. Perhaps this makes it hard to create a community with critical mass.

As an aside Michael, if you are personally struggling with where to put your efforts to propagate the movement, have you considered YouTube? Charles Dowding, who has a very popular channel dedicated to organic no-dig gardening, is a model of how successful and popular such a site can be if done correctly. And while YouTube has its problems, at least it has the potential of funding the channel and possibly generating a decent income.

[Reply Quote](#)

[Edgar Evenkeel](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

February 08, 2022 07:59PM

Registered: 1 year ago

Posts: 5

I care.

I only just recently joined the forum even though i have known about it for years, and I am so glad this online community exists.

I hope to contribute to the forum from this point on, since I have learned so much from many of the forum members at in-person workshops in the past, now with societal isolation, this forum seems more important than ever before.

Like most farmers, there is never enough time in the day, but if I can offer to help transfer data if that would aid the software transition.

Sincerely,

Edgar Evenkeel

[Reply Quote](#)

[Karen Brindle](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

February 27, 2022 08:24AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 103

Yep, I care too! I've learned so much from the wealth of wisdom here, and like James said, I've also met multiple like-minded local growers (Hi James!)

Life had been busy, that's my main excuse for not visiting more but I would not want to see the forum go away, I'm happy to keep supporting it.

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington

235 Cider and heritage apple trees, 72 varieties,

[Reply Quote](#)

[Gil Schieber](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

March 09, 2022 01:05AM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 5

On the heels of a eulogy, it is and has been an important addition to my understanding of the community I embrace. The time I spend here is usually snippets in winter. I love to share what I know and absorb what I don't. Skipley Farm has grown by leaps in the field of organics, biodynamics, the playground of invisible life -this due in large part to Michael's authorship. Let's keep it going with some basic fees.

Skipley Farm 500 varieties, wet spring, clayloam, 1900 gdd, AM,CM, Anthracnose, 20 rootstocks, Seedling Apples, Nursery business 50 years. Excel-

my.sharepoint.com/:x:/p/gil/EcvdyToBAjxEqqSo180osVgBp5QUoWF-5I8e0RDhDhmkdA?e=kkJaZZ

[Reply Quote](#)

[Mason Colby](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

March 10, 2022 03:21AM

Registered: 1 year ago

Posts: 18

I'm new here and new to apples but I like this setup. I hate social media. I don't do Facebook. This format feels much more professional. Everybody loves Facebook though so idk. I can see myself checking in here on a fairly regular basis as I continue to grow. My 2 cents.

[Reply Quote](#)

[Mike Biltonen](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

March 10, 2022 07:17AM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 298

Mason, I think you'll find some kindred spirits here. Nobody is too chummy with Zuckerberg et al (though some of us do use FB - guilty!) or social media in general. We prefer a good pair of Felcos and some nice bittersweets. Thanks for chiming in and letting us know you're out there. Cheers!



[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

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

[Michael Potts](#)

[Re: do you care?](#)

March 10, 2022 09:35PM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 21

I spoke with Nancy and Grace over the weekend, and Nancy shares your thoughts about FB. For my part, I fear it because I think it tends to trivialize us. I agree that this is more professional, and what I like is that it's easier to find old posts that are useful. Thank you for writing

- M the webster ;>

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