



Fruit Production Conservation Choices

CONNECTICUT



Connecticut fruit producers continually search for ways to increase profitability while being good land stewards. Conservation practices offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) help to reduce pests, improve water quality, improve pollinator habitat, and provide other natural resource benefits. NRCS technical and financial assistance programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions to benefit farmers and the environment.

Are you interested in getting the most out of your farm? Whether your goal is increased fruit or nut production, increasing pollinator habitat, improving soil health, or managing pests, NRCS can help.

The goal with any production operation is a healthy, productive crop that allows for long-term sustainability of the natural resources and the operation. NRCS has technical expertise, strong connections to other technical experts, and funding available to help you manage the unique challenges of fruit operations while building a sustainable farm.

This fact sheet lists common conservation practices for enhancing fruit production and improving soil health over time. University of Connecticut (UConn) Cooperative Extension agents are also a valuable source of fruit production expertise. (Photo at right courtesy of UConn Extension Educator, Evan Lentz.)

Fruit production practices should be based on measurable analysis of soil nutrients, soil health attributes, plant tissue analysis, observed productivity and vigor, and the goals of the grower. To learn more about managing your land, visit your local NRCS office. We can help you make the right choices to protect and improve your land and natural resources.



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Practice		Description	Benefits
Pest Management System		Pest prevention, avoidance, monitoring and suppression (PAMS) strategies help manage organisms that can directly or indirectly damage crops.	» Reduces pesticide risk to soil, water, air, plants, animals and humans. » Reduces pesticide risk from leaching, drift, volatilization and direct contact. » Reduces plant pest pressure.
Weather Stations		Weather stations are one of many pest management activities. They can improve the accuracy of pest outbreak predictions by using weather models.	» Increases accuracy of pest management decisions. » Improves plant productivity and health. » Reduces plant pest pressure.
Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat		Planting wildlife friendly grasses and wildflowers to support pollinators and other beneficial insects.	» Increases crop pollination. » Increases predation and parasitism of pests. » Reduces soil erosion and improves water quality.
Pest Management - Sanitation		Prune or destroy plant tissue (leaves, branches, fruits) that harbors pests and diseases.	» Improves plant health. » Reduces pest pressure. » Reduces pesticide use. » Increases beneficial organisms.
Calibrate Spray Equipment		Sprayer calibration and maintenance to improve application rate accuracy and crop coverage.	» Improves management quality. » Reduces pesticide drift. » Improves orchard economics.
Mulching		Utilize woodchips or chipped orchard prunings as mulching around base of trees.	» Reduces herbicide use. » Increases soil moisture retention.
Nutrient Management		Apply the right nutrients at the right time, rate, and location to optimize the soil's chemical properties.	» Improved fruit nutrition with fertigation or foliar application of compost tea. » Improved economics with appropriately calibrated nutrients.

For more information:

- » NRCS-Connecticut: www.nrcs.usda.gov/CT or call 860-871-4011
- » UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources Fruit Program: <https://fruit.cahnر.uconn.edu/>
- » UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources Integrated Pest Management Program: <https://ipm.cahnر.uconn.edu/>