

Lessons Learned

PFI Apple Workshop 2025



Original Orchard

- Planted early 1990's
- Semidwarf trees, M7 rootstock, 16'X14'
- 120+ varieties in various configurations
- Originally trained to espalier system
- No irrigation, very limited pruning
- Began replacing with dwarf trees 2012



Solon Orchard

- Planted 2007-2010, 4' X 14'
- M9 sized trees, trellised, drip irrigation
- Mostly Geneva rootstocks (G11, G16, G935)
- 27 varieties of dessert apples
- Added 5 acres of cider apples in 2015



Lessoned Learned to Date

- Build Strong Trellis
- Irrigation is critical
- Buy Good Trees
- Rootstocks Matter
- Take care of drainage
- Exclude Prairie Rats
- Plant with Upick in mind

Trellising

- Build Strong Trellis
 - ◆ 30' between posts
 - ◆ 5"-6" tops
 - ◆ CCA .60 treated posts
- 4-5 wire
 - ◆ Replaced wood supports
- Vibrating Excavator



Irrigation

- Irrigation is critical for dwarfs
- Easy to cut drip lines on ground
- Automation is easy
- Fertigation possible



Buy Good Trees

- West Coast trees when possible
- Problems with small nurseries
- Growing our Own



Rootstocks Matter

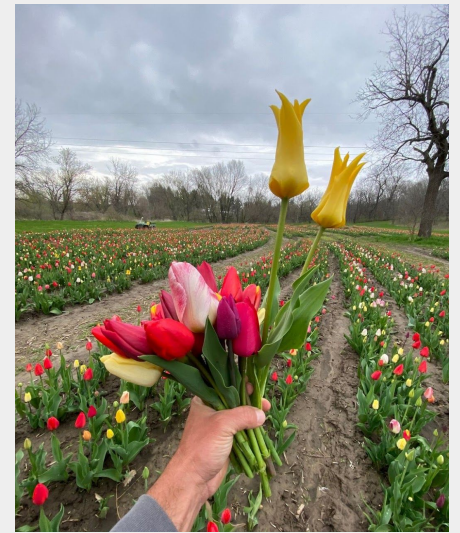
- Bud 9 very unforgiving
- G16 virus issues
- Fire blight on M9
- New rootstocks but untested





Wilson's DSM

- Part of Middlebrook Agri Hood
- Crops April - December
- Farm Market, Restaurant, Venue



Cumming Orchard

- 31 varieties
- M9 sized trees, 2.5' X 12'
- 30' Trellis post spacing
- Raised irrigation lines
- 5 wire trellis



Attention to Upick

- Varieties planted proportional to sales
- Planted in order of ripening
- Lower wire to prevent row crossing
- Cross rows every 360'
- Wide tractor paths



Orchard System

- Slender Spindle System
- Mostly G11, P22 & G935
- Irrigation from pond
- 5 wire trellis
- Windbreak planted
- 8' Woven wire fence



Ongoing Challenges

- Sustainable IPM
- Frost Control
- Heat injury
- Labor
- Upick wastage





Pruning



Pruning

