



JUJUBE PROGRAM IN NEW MEXICO

Jujubes, also called Chinese dates, leaf 4–6 weeks later than most tree fruit species, which allows them to avoid late frosts and produce annually. The fruit is sweet and nutritious, with a vitamin C content 4–12 times higher than citrus. In general, jujubes grow well across New Mexico and the whole Southwest. It is a great alternative crop for fruit growers, small farmers, or home gardeners.

Jujube growing habits and pruning workshops, fruit tasting workshops in the fall of each year since 2010, Extension publications, research publications, media coverage, and marketing activities have all helped make people interested in this unique crop. We have collected around 60 cultivars at NMSU's Sustainable Agriculture Science Center at Alcalde and have set up replicated cultivar trials at three locations, with over 35 cultivars at each site. USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants through NMDA are funding our jujube research and Extension program. NMSU has a leading role in jujube research and Extension efforts in the U.S.



The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences is an engine for economic and community development in New Mexico, improving the lives of New Mexicans through academic, research, and extension programs.

To learn more about the Sustainable Fruit Production Program, contact:

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**SUSTAINABLE FRUIT
PRODUCTION PROGRAM**

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE



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FRUIT PRODUCTION IN NEW MEXICO

Compared to alfalfa and chile, fruit tree acreage and production in New Mexico are limited, especially after the 1971 deep freeze that killed a majority of fruit trees. With plenty of sunshine and huge diurnal temperature variations, fruit quality is excellent in New Mexico, and that is why some growers are sticking with it. A critical issue challenging fruit production in central and northern New Mexico is the late frosts. With wind machines and sprinklers, growers can reduce the impact of late frosts. But most fruit growers are small farms of 1-5 acres and can't afford the wind machine and its operating cost. Our research and Extension program first supports these existing tree fruit growers, while also exploring new alternative production techniques like high tunnels and alternative berries and fruits like strawberries, blackberries, and jujubes, which can produce reliable crops to increase the growers' revenues and improve the quality of their lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

Research

Conduct basic and applied research to increase profits for fruit growers. Examine alternative and exotic fruit crops such as berries

and jujubes. Explore alternative production techniques like high tunnels to avoid the late frost issues challenging the fruit industry in New Mexico.

Extension

Address the fruit-related basic and advanced education needs of a wide range of stakeholders—fruit growers, small farmers, home gardeners, and Extension educators—through field demonstrations, workshops, field days, media coverage, publications, consultations, and site visits.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Recent research and Extension efforts have focused on the following areas:

- Organic and conventional fruit production
- Alternative berry production in New Mexico (USDA block grant and NMDA funded)
- Pest management in organic fruit production
- Orchard floor/soil fertility management
- Jujube promotion (research and Extension) in New Mexico (USDA block grant funded)
- High tunnel stone fruit production (USDA block grant funded)
- Master Gardener training

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACTS

Each year, several hundred to a thousand growers, Master Gardeners, home gardeners, educators, and other stakeholders are reached through the direct activities of the Sustainable Fruit Production Program. Specific questions are answered with recommendations on different aspects of fruit production in New Mexico. In addition, media coverage of the winter damage of stone fruit in February 2011, high tunnel apricot production, high-elevation strawberry production, and jujube research has reached larger audiences nationwide.

Through the direct influence of our jujube program, some growers are starting to grow jujubes commercially, and numerous home gardeners have planted them in their yards. Jujube production has the potential to be a small industry in New Mexico within 15-20 years. Jujube growers from across the country have sent their inquiries to NMSU.