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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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 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

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.

New Mexico State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.