

SARE: advancing the frontier of...

Specialty Crops

From pecans to apples, wine grapes to tomatoes, SARE-funded research is helping specialty crop farmers across the country use sustainable practices to battle pests, tap into lucrative markets and increase yields. More than 22 percent of SARE's 20-year research portfolio has been devoted to growing fruit, nuts, vegetables and other specialty crops in ways that boost profits, protect the nation's land and water, and strengthen communities.

SARE Project Sampler

To view the entire specialty crops portfolio, visit www.sare.org/projects. For selected grants, see the reverse side.



Western SARE: About 4,000 wine growers and others learned how to grow wine grapes sustainably through a series of SARE-funded tailgate meetings, workshops and other events. Members of the Central Coast Vineyard Team used the SARE grant to teach people how to curb erosion, reduce chemical inputs and employ other practices using a 1,000-point self-assessment system. See www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number FW03-010.

North Central SARE: The Eco-Apple Project, a joint project with the University of Wisconsin and state apple growers, used a SARE grant to create three new grower networks and teach agriculture professionals how to better support organic growers. The project reached 100 Extension agents, consultants and others, and led the state to increase incentives for growers using organic methods from \$39 to \$120 per acre. See www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number ENC04-078.

Northeast SARE: New England vegetable farmers were able to reduce pesticide use by 96 percent and earn, on average, an additional \$11,000 in one year, thanks to a two-year, SARE-funded research project that explored using Blue Hubbard squash trap crops to protect cucumbers, eggplants and other produce. When farmers planted a single-row perimeter of the squash around their fields, they were able to draw harmful beetles and other pests away from the main crops. See www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number LNE03-177.

Southern SARE: Researchers at North Carolina State University used a SARE grant to show that grafting tomatoes and growing them in high tunnel structures produces increased yields, fewer diseases and better nutrient absorption. Area farmers, such as specialty crop farmer Alex Hitt, adopted the techniques with great success. See www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number LS06-193.

Getting the Word Out

SARE has produced a host of materials to help farmers grow and market specialty crops, including books such as *The New American Farmer*, which contains more than 60 profiles of successful farmers using sustainable methods, *Managing Cover Crops Profitably*, *Building Better Soils and Manage Insects on Your Farm*. SARE specialty-crop-related bulletins include *Marketing Strategies*, *Diversifying Crops*, *A Whole-Farm Approach to Managing Pests* and many others. Northeast SARE has published a DVD how-to series on cover cropping and other vegetable production techniques.

The SARE specialty crop portfolio—22 percent of SARE's research portfolio— has focused on:
pests and diseases, including those facing pollinators; new innovation to improve yields sustainably;
alternative marketing strategies and more.

SARE's mission is to advance — to the whole of American agriculture — innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.

– SARE's Specialty Crops Portfolio

Selected Grants

WESTERN REGION

Professional Training for Developing a Hands-On Organic Weed Management Learning Center for Commercial Market Gardens in Local Communities - Professional Development Grant
Beth LaShell, San Juan Basin Research Center, Hesperus CO, EW08-016, \$89,492

Screening For Non-Host Rotation Crops Colletotrichum for Strawberry Nurseries in California - Graduate Student Grant
Joseph Jertberg, UC Davis, Davis CA, GW08-015, \$19,534.70

Choosing the Best Figs for Hawaii - Farmer/Rancher Grant
Ken Love, Captain Cook HI, FW07-034, \$29,704

High Value Crop Rotations for Utah High Tunnels - Research & Education Grant
Brent Black, Utah State University, Logan UT, SW07-035, \$144,495

Using Season Extending Techniques to Diversify Traditional Agricultural Economy and Improve Quality and Quantity of Fresh Food Supply in Remote NE Oregon Valley - Farmer/Rancher Grant
June Colony, Lostine OR, FW07-015, \$14,949

SOUTHERN REGION

Sustainable Irrigation Methods for Alternative Crop Production - On-Farm Grant
Elina Coneva, Auburn University, Auburn AL, OS08-040, \$15,000

Biodegradable Mulch - Farmer/Rancher Grant
Eric Plaksin, Waterpenny Farm, Sperryville VA, FS07-218, \$3,457

Potential of Grafting to Improve Nutrient Management of Heirloom Tomatoes on Organic Farms - Graduate Student Grant
Suzanne O'Connell, NCSU, Raleigh NC, GS07-060, \$10,000

Sustainable Low-Cost Heating for Season Extension Structures - Farmer/Rancher Grant
Steve Hodges, Clinch Appalachian Farm Enterprises, Sneedville TN, FS07-214, \$14,928

Perennial Legumes as a Sustainable Source of Soil Organic Matter in Southeastern Organic Farming Systems - Research & Education Grant
Carl Jordan, UGA Institute of Ecology, Athens GA, LS06-190, \$190,000

NORTHEAST REGION

Evaluation of Southern Peas as Cash Cover Crop in Pennsylvania - Farmer/Rancher Grant
Michael Byers, Demeter's Garden, Spring Mills PA, FNE08-625, \$5,399

Increasing Quality, Diversity and Seed Availability of Potato Varieties For Small-Scale Farms - Research & Education Grant
Keith Perry, Cornell University, Ithaca NY, LNE08-272, \$176,434

Crop Planning Software For Small, Diversified Farms - Farmer/Rancher Grant
Clayton Carter, Unity ME, FNE07-600, \$9,054

Training For Ag Service Providers in the Diagnosis, Visual Assessment and Management of Plant-Parasitic Nematodes - Professional Development Grant
George Abawi, Cornell University, Geneva NY, ENE07-102, \$116,115

Passamaquoddy Youth Wild Berry Package Development - Community Innovation Grant
Deirdre Whitehead, Passamaquoddy Tribe, Perry ME, CNE06-016, \$8,881

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Developing Pest Management Guidelines For Organic Production of Highbush Blueberries in the North Central Region - Research & Education Grant
Annemiek Schilder, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI, LNC07-281, \$149,991

Implementing Biointensive Pest Management For Profitable Apple Production - Research & Education Grant
Mark Gleason, Iowa State University, Ames IA, LNC07-284, \$129,427

The Management of Watermelon Vine Decline Through Sustainable Management Practices - Research & Education Grant
Daniel Egel, Purdue University Botany and Plant Pathology, Vincennes IN, LNC06-266, \$98,500

Kansas City Organic High Tunnel Research Cooperative - Farmer/Rancher Grant
Stu Shafer, Oskaloosa KS, FNC05-577, \$17,975

Emission of the Greenhouse Gas Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) from Riparian Forest Buffers, Warm-Season and Cool-Season Grass Filters and Crop Fields - Graduate Student Project
Dong-Gill Kim, Iowa State University, Ames IA, GNC06-061, \$9,990

For information on hundreds more SARE-funded specialty crops projects (1988-2008), search the SARE project database: www.sare.org/projects

This publication was made with funding by USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service.

