



**OREGON ORGANIC HAZELNUT COLLECTIVE**

# The *Organic Catkin* Newsletter

February 2023

Issue 1

## Welcome to the Newsletter!

We are excited to launch our OOHC quarterly newsletter. It provides an opportunity to share information, resources, opportunities, and events. If you are a member, you'll receive it via email without any further action needed. Non-members can sign up for the newsletter on our website.



NW Native Nuts LLC, Creswell

## Become a Member

As a member of the Oregon Organic Hazelnut Collective, you receive:

- A free ticket to our annual Summer Tour
  - Including admission to the tour, lunch, and educational presentations (\$35+ value)
- Online forum access
- Farm listing on the OOHC website
- Inclusion in the membership directory

Membership is just \$50/year - sign up [here!](#)

## About the Oregon Organic Hazelnut Collective

Since forming in 2017, the Oregon Organic Hazelnut Collective (OOHC) has developed into the only organization providing education, building community, and creating resources specific to Oregon's organic hazelnut industry.

The organization is guided by an Advisory Committee and is currently expanding its capacity with the formation of sub-committees. Join one today to further the support of a thriving organic hazelnut community!

This summer will mark our 5th annual Summer Farm Tour. To kick off the year, we are launching this quarterly newsletter and a grower forum. We're organizing additional events, such as a February panel presentation on transitioning to organic and this summer we'll be adding a YouTube channel to share videos.

The OOHC is a program of Cascade Pacific RC&D, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



## Transitioning to Organic

By Bruce Kaser

*Member Story*

During a family vacation in Sicily 7 years ago, I took a day and drove through Sicily's hazelnut-growing region. Many of the orchards that I saw were small orchards, terraced on mountainsides, with orchard floors in grass and weeds and no room for tractors or the kind of ground-harvesting equipment that is common in Oregon. However, it struck me that the locals have been harvesting hazelnuts off steep slopes for thousands of years.

Our farm is not prime farmland. It is hard to find a level spot on our farm. Raising hazelnuts on a slope, and maintaining the orchard floor like a baseball infield, is a recipe for soil erosion. While terracing solves the erosion problem in Sicily – it is obviously not a feasible solution in Oregon. However, what I saw in Sicily did get me to thinking that maybe it is possible to ground harvest through flailed-down grass (and weeds) on a hillside hazelnut orchard. One thing led to another, as we worked through that problem, which caused us to transition one of our orchards to certified organic several years ago.

There are disadvantages, hassles, and certainly risks in transitioning to organic. We don't know where it will take us or whether we will be successful with it in the long term. However, the Oregon industry sells roughly 1/3 of the Oregon crop to Ferrero (shelled); roughly 1/3 goes to Asia (inshell); and the rest goes elsewhere. Neither Ferrero nor Asia buys organic hazelnuts (at least not yet). Therefore, right now, the market for organic hazelnuts lies within a more diverse U.S. domestic market. One advantage to having a certified organic crop to sell this year is that organic prices paid to growers competes well in the U.S. market against Turkish kernels.

What does the future bring? I don't know. I do know, though, that our farm made close to \$1800 per acre gross profit on our organic orchard on the 2022 crop; and broke even on our conventional orchard.

## 2023 Summer Tour – Seeking Sites

Each year we select one or more organic hazelnut orchards (or related sites) to include in the summer tour. If you have such a site, and would like to be considered as a host site for a future summer farm tour, please let us know via the website contact form, or talk directly with a member of the Advisory Committee.



Cow Pig Dragon Farm, Yamhill



## Analyzing Production Costs of Organic Hazelnuts in Oregon

By Tanya Murray

In 2021, Oregon Tilth was awarded a Professional and Producer grant by the Western Sustainable

Agriculture to develop an analysis tool that organic hazelnut producers can use to determine their own operation's costs of production. The purpose of this project is to support organic hazelnut producers with making more informed business decisions that can ultimately lead to more viable organic operations.

Tanya Murray, Farm Viability Specialist at Oregon Tilth is leading the effort to develop the tool in collaboration with a small group of Oregon Organic hazelnut producers. The collaborating producers are currently piloting the costing tool and providing valuable feedback based on their on the ground experience. Once completed, the costing tool and user manual will be available on Oregon Tilth's website. A series of case studies illustrating how the tool can be used to make business decisions about changes to production systems and changes to scale will accompany the tool and user's manual.

The project team will also be giving demonstrations of the tool and sharing lessons learned at in-person and virtual presentations in 2024. For more information about this project please contact [tanya@tilth.org](mailto:tanya@tilth.org)

## Upcoming Events

### Why Go Organic Webinar hosted by OOHCC

*This event is Free  
All are Invited*

**Date: Thursday, February 23, 2023**

**Time: 4 pm – 5 pm PST**

**Where: Zoom**

Oregon grows 99% of the hazelnuts in the U.S., yet less than 1% are grown using organic practices. So, why go organic? Hear from a panel of leaders in the Oregon Organic Hazelnut movement as they share their reasons, challenges and opportunities for going organic.

Register here!



SCAN ME

### Panelists

MaryClair Birkemeier Stehman,  
Meridian Orchard  
Bruce Kaser, Pratum Farm  
Jed White, Cascade Foods

### Annual Summer Farm Tour

August 2023

More information to come,  
keep an eye on the website or sign up for our  
mailing list.



*Visit our website*

[www.oregonorganichazelnuts.org](http://www.oregonorganichazelnuts.org)