



**Abbott Farms 2012-2013**

Berry soil nutrient management project

# Our Farm, and what we do

Abbott farms is a u-pick and Agritourism centered farm, located in Baldwinsville NY.

We offer a variety of u-pick fruit crops including strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, sweet cherries, apples, Italian prunes, and more

Our growing operation is geared toward local agritourism by getting our community involved with, and educated on, a modern working farm.



# Our Farm, and what we do



We have a strong focus on education and providing a true “day on the farm” experience for our guests

During our fall Festival weekends we host upwards of 1000 people every weekend. We offer wagon rides, a custom corn maze, farm grown foods, family activities and more.

We are currently striving to improve overall productivity, and provide better products to our customers.

# The Blueberry nutrient Project.



We chose to study our chandler blueberries. They are our most popular variety.

We have a total of 6 rows, measuring 640 feet long.

This variety in particular was one we wanted to try and improve. They were hit hard by the freeze events of 2012 because of their location in our blueberry patch.

Many plants had lost all their buds in 2012 and suffered due to the cold.

# The Blueberry nutrient Project.

- With the help of project educator Cathy Heidenreich we did a Cornell soil health test in late June and took a leaf tissue sample in late July.
- The sample showed a higher than ideal pH, and a severe lack of organic matter in the soil.
- The tissue sample showed an iron deficiency, and slightly lower than ideal nitrogen levels.

# The Blueberry nutrient Project.

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- We wanted to address the available nitrogen issue.
- Through this study we found that many other growers had a lack of good organic matter in their soils. Which is what we thought was leading to our lack of usable nitrogen.
- So that was the issue we tried to tackle.

# The Blueberry nutrient Project.



We create a lot of organic waste on our farm. So using leftover apple pumice from our cider operation, food wastes from our farm store and kitchens, yard wastes from landscaping and flower beds, and sheep, goat, and chicken manure we created a compost pile.

Using an aerated static pile system we were able to create 8-10 yards of usable composted material this year.

# The Blueberry nutrient Project.

- Unfortunately, we were not able to use this batch of compost this year
- We bought several bags of composted manure.
- We raked off the top layer of wood chips around the blueberry bushes and scraped back 1" of soil (down to the first visible roots.) Then incorporated the compost in as best we could and replaced the wood chips.

# What happened

- Nothing overly conclusive.
- Fruit quantity and quality was almost identical.
- The composted test plot bushes had slightly better overall growth.
- Weed pressure on both plots was severe, however it was a bad year for weeds.
- Bud set, and new shoot growth seemed better on the composted test plot.

# What happened

- We started a better waste management system on the farm.
- Started a new visible effort to conserve and recycle our farms resources.
- May have improved our soil health.
- Learned more about our growing operation and experimented with new ideas.
- Helped us and other farms across NY.

# Where do we go from here

- We will continue, and grow our composting program.
- Keep experimenting with improving organic content in our soil and monitoring N levels.
- Be more diligent on soil and leaf samples throughout the growing season.
- Plug into an improved network of resources