

## McCall, Erin

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**From:** owner-ndsu-sbare@listserv.nodak.edu on behalf of 00000f991a64ec7b-dmarc-request@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 2, 2023 2:11 PM  
**To:** ndsu.sbare@ndsu.edu  
**Subject:** support funding for CREC fruit project

Hello,

My name is Donna Mack, I'm writing in conjunction with my family Jeremiah and Angie Blahna. Jeremiah and Angie have received the 2023 Foster County Conservation Achievement Award. Although their shelter-belt is thriving, their orchard and berry crop have sustained significant drought loss and will need replanting. Their long term goal with the orchard and berry crops are to create a "u-pick" in conjunction with a farm fall festival. This replanting is what instigated me to contact Kathy Wiederholt for advice on tree health. She also introduced me to new berry varieties that I used to start a jam and jelly product to sell at farmers markets. My goal is to also sell locally online.

Kathy introduced me to elderberries, a variety of currants, and aronias. This turned my business in a totally new direction and a successful one. I visited extensively with customers at farmers market throughout the summer and fall. I found there is a demand for new products that are health conscious. This has shown me this is a viable business for me and for my families future for an orchard and tourist fall event.

Kathy's shared knowledge from good planting practices, through the correct spacing, to the pruning all the way to timing of harvest is invaluable. To be able to view the berries and trees at maturation is the most helpful to see what a quality finished product should look like.

She was able to advise which fruit trees should not be replanted by showing what the disease can look like and how it spreads to the other varieties. This provides information that can save years of costly investments. This can literally make the difference between failure and success.

Research is needed to identify:

- 1] disease and drought resistant varieties that will be able to sustain climate change.
- 2] newest technology for conserving water to irrigate.
- 3] bee sustainability
- 4] cost effective ways to store fruit and berries

Through visiting extensively at the local markets while selling my products, I have learned that the trend is definitely heading towards a healthy, less processed food product. People are willing to pay for a product that is locally sourced.

CREC could be the link to the success to small business's supporting our local communities to providing quality products

Thank you,  
Donna Mack