

# UFOs, Export Assistance, Irrigation Online – WSU’s On Solid Ground for May 23, 2012

Posted by steven.reynolds | May 24, 2012

## UFOs in Your Cherry Orchard

Two-year-old trees in the WSU Roza Experimental Orchard near Prosser are the first step in transforming a 100-year-old production system for sweet cherries—and they have UFOs. No, the trees don’t harbor aliens, but they do grow unique branches. These “upright fruiting offshoots” form the core of a novel architecture ideally suited for mechanized harvesters in sweet cherry orchards of the future.

Planted at an angle, young trees are trained to grow UFOs on a two-dimensional plane, putting more of their effort into developing a fruiting wall instead of the nonproductive wood typical of a traditional, three-dimensional canopy.

The UFO tree architecture is taking off around the world, according to Matthew Whiting, associate professor of horticulture at the WSU Irrigated



Cherry trees trained in the UFO system. Photo: Washington State University.

Agriculture Research and Extension Center. Whiting also co-directs a \$3.9 million, four-year, collaborative project funded by a USDA Specialty Crops Research Initiative grant to develop a sustainable, stem-free cherry production, processing, and marketing system.

*Read the rest of this article by Nella Letizia on the [WSU ag news site](#) »*

## Online Tool Assists Ag Exporters



Export assistance is just a click away.

It just got a lot easier for Washington growers to plan their export strategy, thanks to a new tool developed by the Export Assistance Program at Washington State University. The Export Assistance Program focuses on agriculture and food products and is part of the Washington Small Business Development Center export program.

Andrew Cassey, lead researcher with the Export Assistance Program, took information contained in the 2012 Washington State Report on Foreign Trade Barriers to Agricultural Exports and created two searchable, online databases for public use. The portal for the databases is at <http://bit.ly/exportag>.

One database contains information by country and product type about taxes, quotas and other export charges. A second database contains information about more than 30 non-tariff barriers such as pesticide regulations, import licenses, regulatory transparency and product labeling and is also searchable by country and product type.

“It’s a great service,” said Janet Leister, international marketing program manager for the Washington State Department of Agriculture. “Most states don’t have this, especially not online.” *[Read more at the WSU News site](#) »*

*Download a free PDF “[Export Process Quick Start Guide](#)” which provides step-by-step instructions for novices in agriculture exporting. A more detailed guide, including sample documents from various agencies, is available at <http://bit.ly/JzFtMW>.*

## Online Irrigation Tool Goes Live

With the release of Irrigation Scheduler Mobile, irrigation just got easier for Washington homeowners and agricultural producers. An online tool developed

by researchers at Washington State University, Irrigation Scheduler Mobile combines information about soil, crop type, and weather to calculate the optimal amount of water to use.

Irrigation Scheduler Mobile is an interactive website optimized for smart phones and other mobile devices, although it works equally well on desktop computers. The system uses data from AgWeatherNet, WSU's network of nearly 140 weather stations across the state of Washington that collects data on local precipitation, temperature, humidity, sunshine, and wind speed.

Troy Peters, WSU Extension irrigation specialist, partnered with AgWeatherNet director Gerrit Hoogenboom and AgWeatherNet Web developer Sean Hill to create the system.

Those wishing to use the irrigation scheduler can create a free account [here](#), select a nearby weather station, and enter their soil type and crop type (including, for property owners and golf course managers, grass or turf). The system displays water deficit with color-coded warnings when low moisture levels may damage plants. System users can update their accounts with the amounts of water they've applied to the lawn or crop.

By sticking to system recommendations, users can walk the fine line of saving water while optimizing crop yields. That's not to say that Irrigation Scheduler Mobile is a one-trick pony. For those who want to dig deeper into the mysteries of irrigation and crop management, it also calculates daily crop water use, cumulative water use, crop coefficients and root zone depth over time, the estimated amount of water lost to deep percolation, the degree of water stress, and estimated yield lost due to water stress.

*Read the rest of this story by Bob Hoffman on the [WSU ag news website](#) »*

Troy Peters, WSU extension irrigation specialist, left, checks the irrigation scheduler on his phone in a cherry orchard with Sean Hill, AgWeatherNet

Troy Peters, WSU Extension irrigation specialist, left, checks the irrigation scheduler on his phone in a cherry orchard with Sean Hill, AgWeatherNet Web developer, and Gerrit Hoogenboom, AgWeatherNet director.

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