

Mapping fungi, school orchards, and a pup update

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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- A Fungi Network
- Wintergreens
- Biodiversity & Pest Management
- School Orchards
- Report from the MT Outpost



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An Underground Fungi Network, Mapped

Beneath the Earth's surface, there are complex underground networks of fungi that move impressive amounts of carbon and nutrients—referred to as *arbuscular mycorrhizal fungal networks*. And now, there's a new interactive map showing where these strands of tubular cells are thriving and where they're not.



ASHS Journals - HortScience, JASHS and HortTechnology

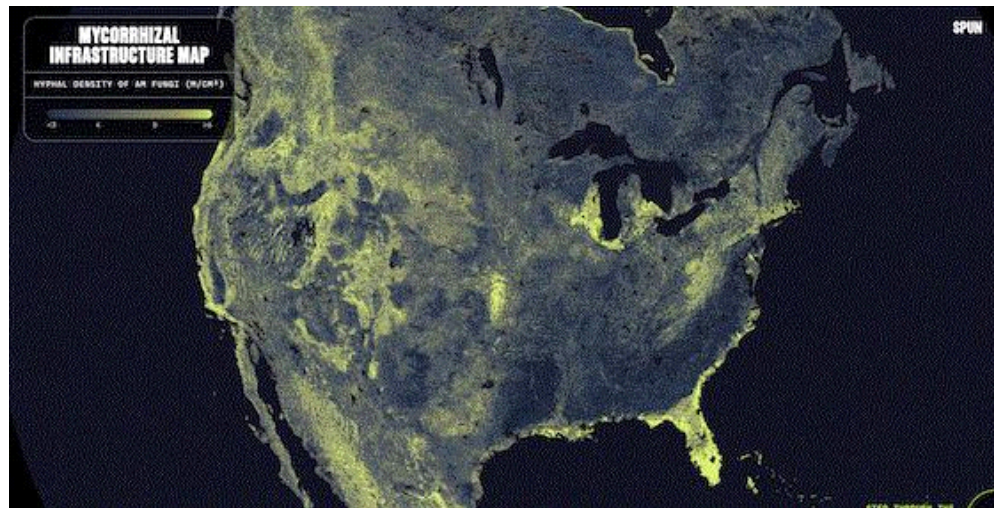
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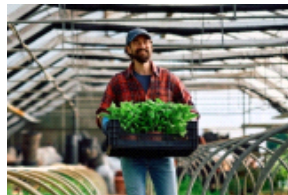


The map was developed by SPUN (Scientists from the Society for the Protection of Underground Networks), using 16,000 soil samples gathered by hundreds of scientists, and then adding soil chemistry, climate vegetation data and machine learning models to make predictions. The result is a highly detailed map that you can zoom in right down to your road. (Use the “my location” feature at the bottom to get oriented.) Turns out I live in a very dense network.

While you might think that forested areas would have the densest networks based on their vegetation, this research shows otherwise. Below ground, wild grasslands were more than a third denser than tropical broadleaf forests.

SPUN noted, "The data suggest that large-scale agricultural croplands are predicted to be associated with about 50% lower network densities. The research doesn't link particular farming practices to mycorrhizal health, but researchers worry lower fungal densities reduce soil resilience and lower its ability to cycle nutrients and store carbon."

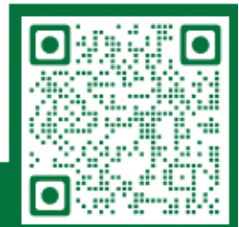
Head [HERE](#) to explore the map and learn more.



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Wintergreens Forage Kit

I love foraging for winter greens, and my colleague Ellen Wells reported on this new Wintergreens Forage Kit in Buzz!

[M&M Wintergreens](#) and [Oasis Forage Products](#) recently announced that they are collaborating on a retail-ready Wintergreens Forage Kit for holiday sales. This is a collaboration and a product that I didn't know we needed, but now that it exists, it makes total sense.

Available starting in July and exclusively through M&M Wintergreens, the kit includes signage, Oasis Porch Pot Forage Foam and Oasis Stay Green anti-transpirant solution. Meant to be displayed alongside M&M Wintergreens' fresh greenery porch pot kits, the Wintergreens Forage Kit lets consumers easily create their own winter and holiday porch pots. And displayed together, they create an easy end-cap or display that encourages impulse sales.



Shannon Kuhrt, president of M&M Wintergreens, is excited about this new collab. “Most consumers don’t have a forest in their backyard to forage fresh evergreen cuttings, so our fresh evergreen porch pot kits provide the foraging materials to sell alongside the Wintergreens Forage Kit. This combined solution is easy to set-and-sell to the consumers in a grab-and-go format.”

Mike Walburn, Oasis Forage Product sales representative said, “Oasis Forage Porch Pot Foam helps keep stems secure, hydrated and beautifully arranged, whether using foraged or fresh materials. Finish your creation with Oasis StayGreen Spritz to keep everything hydrated, fresh and vibrant.”

Sell the Wintergreens Forage Kit alongside M&M Wintergreens’ two unique styles of fresh greenery porch pot kits. And get a look at the collab yourself during Cultivate’26. Visit M&M Wintergreens Inc. in booth #2246 and Oasis Forage Products booth #3619.

With all the interest in DIY and crafting projects, this collaboration certainly makes sense, and is available at a time of year when other outdoorsy craft projects have wound down.



Your Next Listen: Farmscaping for Pest Management

Interested in how plants can improve not only biodiversity but outdoor pest management? The National Center for Agricultural Technology just released a new ATTRA: Voices from the Field podcast on this topic.



NCAT agriculture specialists Rex Dufour, Audrey Kolde and Nina Prater talk about the principles of farmscaping—a practice of integrating native and diverse plants into agricultural spaces. Rex has been championing farmscaping for decades as a way to enhance biological control of pests.

Head over [HERE](#) to listen. Or search for ATTRA - Voices from the Field Podcast, episode 391.



School Orchards

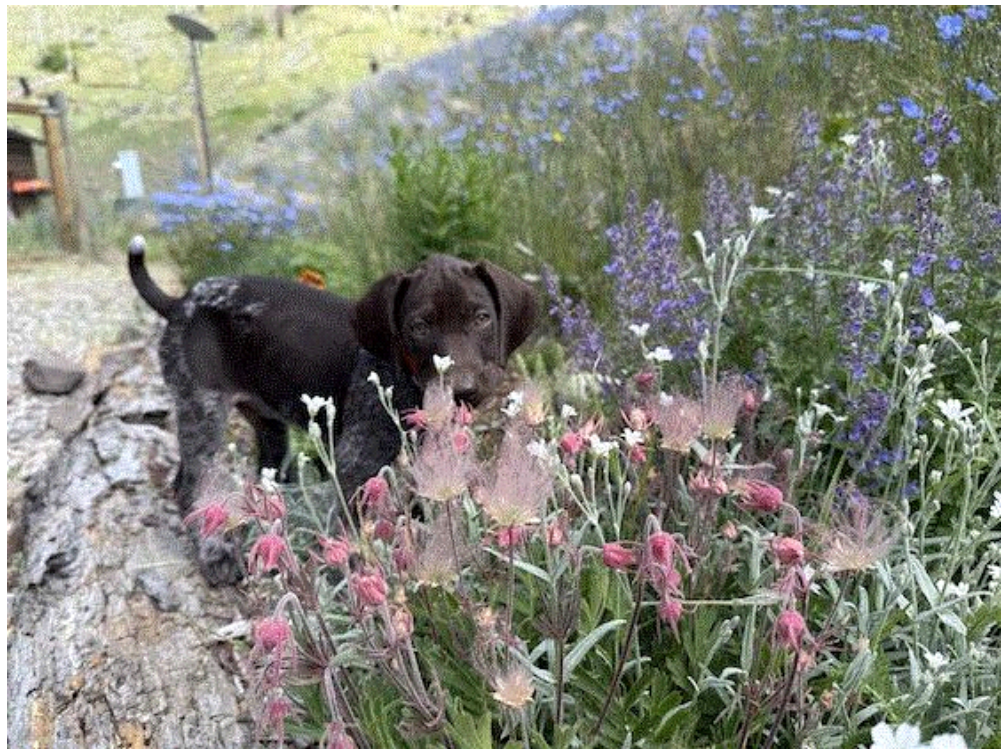
Thanks to a couple of grants, Kids Gardening just released a School Orchard Lesson Guide. Created to help educators integrate fruit trees into their curriculum, it includes ten lesson modules for grades K-6. It's a great way to encourage planting a school orchard, or even a single fruit tree, to help kids get excited not only about trees but also fresh fruit.

This guide was developed in collaboration with ReTreeUS through grant support from the 2024 United States Department of Agriculture Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant and the 2024 Onion Foundation Environment Program Nature Learning Grant.

Head on over [HERE](#) to check it out. And consider sharing it with a local school—and maybe hooking them up with a few trees!



Report from the MT Outpost



I don't know who has received more compliments: Aldo or the Prairie Smoke.

After several years of well-behaved adult dogs, I'm getting a re-education in puppy ways. Aldo has sampled nearly every houseplant at least once, chomped on a few petunias, destroyed a bracteantha, thoroughly explored the compost pile (last year's cabbage stalks were highly prized), mowed down most of the dandelions, and nearly gotten ahold of a highly toxic black henbane down the road. I'm relearning pet-friendly plants, that's for sure. It's one of those things I barely thought about, and now it's front and center.

Thankfully, at just 10 weeks, Aldo has learned what “no” means, so we’re making progress.

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer". The script is cursive and fluid.

Jennifer Duffield White

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