

Midwest apple producers receive season-long mentoring

The Apple Grower Hour

In summer of 2008, OFRF sponsored *The Apple Grower Hour*, a series of free regional community conference calls with expert organic apple grower Michael Phillips, with adjunct consultation from Wisconsin apple IPM specialist John Aue. Calls were targeted to commercial apple growers in the Upper Midwest with intermediate to advanced orchard management skills, and were scheduled weekly from April 24 through August 28.

Michael Phillips is a well known and respected authority on organic apple production, emphasizing a holistic approach to orchard management. He is author of the book *The Apple Grower: A Guide for the Organic Orchardist* (1998, Chelsea Green).

During the weekly conference calls, any topics were discussed, including but not limited to vertebrate predator control, insect and disease management, soil fertility balancing, desirable fruit varieties, and weather.

In Brief:

Over the course of 17 weeks during the growing season, Upper Midwest apple producers had the opportunity to sit in on weekly phone call mentoring sessions with seasoned organic apple producer Michael Phillips. The calls provided valuable discussion sessions for those who attended, and the recorded sessions are available for free to others through the *Apple Grower Hour* archive.

The Apple Grower Hour archive

A great feature of this series is that all 17 weekly call summaries and recordings are still available online in *The Apple Grower Hour* archive, which is housed on the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES) website:

<http://www.mosesorganic.org/treefruit/growerhour.html>

On the archive page visitors can browse the summaries and select calls to listen to. Instructions are available on the web page. Or, to bypass your computer and dial *The Apple Grower Hour* archives directly, call (641) 715-3800, then enter the access code: 95226. From there, a menu allows you to select calls by the week.

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*Herbsandapples.com
New Hampshire-based organic apple producer and author Michael Phillips.*

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