

FIELD
TESTED



Deer Fencing and Bird Netting for Small Orchards



Field Tested is a series of reports about farm tools that have been tested by Montana farmers to enhance their specialty crop production. The reports describe these farmers' findings to help others make informed decisions about their specialty crop businesses. Visit FarmLinkMontana.org/fieldtested to read more Field Tested reports. This project is administered by the Community Food & Agriculture Coalition with funding from the Montana Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Bridger Berries | Belgrade

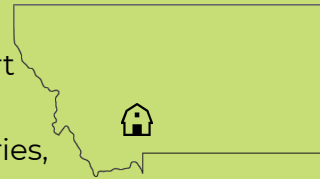
Farm Snapshot

Location: Belgrade, MT

Operator: Emely Lambert

Acres: 2.5 acres

Crops: Raspberries, cherries, strawberries, currants, and honey-berries.



Emely Lambert
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INTRODUCTION

Bridger Berries decided to use their Field Tested Grant funds to improve their orchard with overhead bird netting and deer fencing. All the growth their farm is experiencing is amplifying the unwanted animals and birds faster than they can handle. Because of their scaling up, implementation of a new fencing and pest control system was needed to ensure better harvests. Improved harvests will mean improved profits for their farm. It will also open up more opportunities for Bridger Berries to increase their value added products.

FARM BIO

Bridger Berries is a berry orchard north of Bozeman, MT growing several varieties of cherries, raspberries, strawberries, currants and honey-berries. Bridger Berries has been around the Gallatin Valley at local farmers markets over the years, but is finally making their way to produce for local grocery stores and the craft beverage industry, along with their value added products of baked goods and jams.

Equipment Purchased

- Bird Netting
- Deer Netting
- Fence Posts

The cherry orchard is the latest addition and one of just a few in Yellowstone country. Emely, the owner, is excited to explore growing cherry trees in a colder zone than that what is typically found in the Bitterroot and Flathead valleys. She believes the potential can open up many doors for Montana specialty crops and increase production in different areas of the state.

FENCING TIPS AND NOTES

Emely decided to purchase her netting system from Oesco Inc, USA. She rented an auger from Ace Hardware and purchased her small tools and hardware supply from Murdochs.

The installation was a four step process: 1. Deer Netting, 2. 16ft posts into the ground, 3. Wire harness assembly, 4. Bird Net placement.

Step 1. Deer netting was hung using 10' T-posts and bailing twine to secure the net to each post. Post placement was roughly 15-20ft.



Deer Netting.

Step 2. A pull behind auger with a 4ft bit was used to make the holes for the 16' posts. Quick-rite concrete mix and scrap posts from Murdochs were used for bracing and placement of posts for bird netting.

Steps 3 and 4. Wire & bird net placement will be set-up once the trees are matured and needed to protect the harvest. Emely will be providing an update of this procedure once it happens.

RESULTS

Overall, Emely has been very happy with the deer netting and bird netting system. The deer net system has proven effective, as she has seen no deer droppings, chew marks, or antler scratching on any of the trees within the fenced area. She has only found 4 holes in the ground from either a mole or vole.

Additionally, the net system has held through the seasons withstanding snow, rain, and wind. She has not been able to collect much data for the bird netting yet, but she should know in the next few years how effective it is.



Support structures for bird netting.

Additional Resources

Montana Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program: The purpose of this program is solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Montana. Visit their website to find funding opportunities and more information. Search [Montana SCBG](#).

Field Tested Reports and Videos: Find more reports about other projects and see videos of tools in action at the [Field Tested webpage, under Resources on FarmLinkMontana.org](#)

Farm Link Montana: A project of the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition to connect Montana's beginning farmers and ranchers with the tools they need to succeed: farmlinkmontana.org