An Introduction

WSU’s Tukey Orchard is an operation split between two sites, the new site at Spillman Farm, and the old site at Tukey orchard on antelope road. Between these two sites, the orchard seeks to grow a variety of fruit to sell to the public, these fruit include apples, cherries, and plums with plans to add blueberries, peaches, and pears to that list in future years. On top of having trees for fruit production, a special research block is currently being planted for use by WSU students interested in researching apples.

Responsibilities

- Perform winter pruning of apple trees
- Plant new apple trees
- Apply rodent guards to young trees
- Plant blueberries
- Inspect new trellis lines for proper tension
- Perform sprayer calibration
- Inspect rodent damage
- Water blueberries in pots
- Apply codling moth pheromone traps and twist tie lures
- Tie up unused irrigation lines
- Review Washington apple orchard pest database
- Perform grafting of ‘Gala’ onto old trees

What I Learned

This experience has given me hands on experience that will be invaluable to me as I begin my professional experiences. Being able to not only sit down and talk through the differences between tree fruit pruning and landscape pruning but being able to see the differences in existing trees really helped to make it clear how different pruning systems can be, and the importance of understanding the different types of pruning systems. Wanting to move on to work as a greenhouse and nursery grower, I can use this newfound knowledge to help better inform potential clients as to what they can do to better care for their personal fruit trees.

Helping to build the new orchard site at Spillman Farm has really showed me what it takes for new farms and orchards to come into existence. Being a part of a small farm like this has reinvigorated my love and drive to bring people and plants closer together. Having a dream to one day own enough land to have a small farm of my own that can be a center for education and community growth, this experience has given me some of what I need to know to make that dream come true.

As I continue working with this group over the summer, I hope to learn even more of what it takes to run and operate a small farm with an even smaller work force. This has been an experience that I can not recommend enough to fellow students looking to gain orchard knowledge or small farm knowledge.