Clements Receives the International Fruit Tree Association Industry Service Award for 2024

Andre Tougas
Grower and Board Member IFTA
Win Cowgill
Professor Emeritus Rutgers Univ. and Owner Win Enterprises International

At the recent winter conference of the International Fruit Tree Association (IFTA) in Rochester, NY Jon Clements was presented with the IFTA Industry Service Award by Andre Tougas.

Photo Credit Win Cowgill.

Jon Clements, self-proclaimed Mr. Liberty, now Mr. Honeycrisp, is a native Vermonter and received his B.S Degree in Wildlife Management in 1977 at the University of Vermont. After several intervening jobs, including short-order cook and hardware/garden center store manager, and a stint as day-care provider to his two daughters, Jon began his career in tree fruit as a Research Technician at the University of Vermont working with Dr. Joe Costante.

While there, he received his M.S in Plant & Soil Science in 1998 and shortly thereafter took a job with Michigan State University Extension as Berrien County Horticulture Extension Agent. Jon returned to New England in 2000 as Extension Tree Fruit Specialist at the University of Massachusetts based at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard in Belchertown, MA.

Jon has been on the cutting edge of digital outreach and education. He introduced the internet to fruit growers in the 1990s and saw the future value it could have as a communications tool. In 1993 he and Win Cowgill started the Virtual Orchard website (one of the first 10,000 websites in the world) and the Apple Crop email list serve group that reached 800 growers worldwide, both still operating today. Later they built IDFTAs first website creating video and photo reports for summer tours and winter conferences. Still up and running today.

Jon pushed Massachusetts and New England growers to modernize their orchards, planting Tall Spindle

blocks on farms across the state through the his MOPUP Massachusetts Orchard Production Upgrade Program. Jon writes for and edits the UMASS Healthy fruit newsletter, regularly writes articles for his blog https://jmcextman.blogspot.com/, is spear heading the IFTA history project with Matthew Schuld, and runs the NC-140 Website. He planned the IFTA Boston conference and the England Belgium tour with my father, served on the IFTA board for 9 years, is a collaborator on GiselaCherry.com, and is Lead communications director for the Precision Apple Cropload Management Project aka PACMAN - he will be happy I'm plugging his website https://pacman.extension.org/ All growers should check it out.

He has posted countless tree fruit production videos on YOU TUBE that are viewed across the country and world (the most watched videos in all of India according to Win) - in fact after the conference in Yakima wrapped last winter Jon and I walked into a bar to have a drink and unwind, two Washington field managers, who had obviously enjoyed more than a few beverages at the bar, recognized Jon from his videos and were ecstatic to meet him!

Jon's passion is in tree fruit horticulture and digital communication & technology and where the two topics intersect. It would take too much time to list all the ways Jon has reached and helped growers in New England, the USA and across the world. My father and I have traveled across the country and the world with Jon to see cutting-edge orchards and we consider him the best of friends - despite the two of them arguing like an old married couple. It's my honor to present you with this award- Thank you Jon all you have done for our industry, congratulations- cheers!

It would take many more pages to list all the ways Jon has helped fruit growers in New England, the USA and truly the world

Citations

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