

MAD LIMBS - A story of fruit trees in Montezuma County

The year was _____.

A group of covered _____ made the long and arduous journey from Missouri to Colorado. In the _____, there were _____, and _____, and _____ and things like that. But there were also fruit trees! There were 100 _____ trees, plus some _____, _____, _____, and _____ trees, too.

Once these fruit trees arrived in Western Colorado (just a little north of here) they were _____. But they were experiments. Growing fruit trees was a new adventure: no one knew if these trees would grow and produce at a high elevation, in a different climate. With time, the trees did in fact grow! Their _____ extended, their _____ stretched Up and out. The _____ shone and the trees converted this light to energy. It _____ sometimes, but not regularly enough for these trees. To solve this dilemma, the farmers decided to set up irrigation systems that carried water from the rivers to the trees. With this consistent water, the trees grew leaves; their flowers _____ and bees visited.

The bees flew from tree to tree, transferring _____ as they went. After the blossoms were _____, they fruited! When the farmers realized that certain fruit trees could

tending to the orchards in southwest Colorado, and found new ways to make money, like _____. For years and years, the trees sat.

Fast forward to RIGHT NOW.

Across the country and the world, people are again starting to appreciate apples and other fruits with unique tastes. They are also seeing the importance of having many types of the same tree – or diversity. This diversity is especially important as our climate changes. Certain traits that we don't value in trees right now may be very valuable in the future.

But here's the problem. The fruit trees - those trees whose fruit won gold medals for having the most delicious in the whole world- are reaching the end of their lives. They're very old. Luckily, there are people in our area who have taken an interest in restoring the orchards and saving the fruit trees. These people have created the Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project to help bring our orchards back. This project uses grafting to make copies the old trees so that they can continue to grow. In reality, these new trees are hundreds of years old. That's really special!

Thanks for learning!

thrive and produce in western Colorado, they wanted to grow more. So they _____ their trees. _____ creates a copy of a tree. To _____, the farmer would take a twig from one tree, the tree they wanted to copy. They connected this _____ to the _____ of different tree. Now this was a tricky process, and it didn't always work.

Farmers here discovered that the high elevation with its warm _____ and colder _____ made their fruit sweeter. Soon enough, there were lots of orchards throughout the county. All of the different types of _____ looked and tasted different.

By _____, there were 48,630 _____ trees in Montezuma County. From 100 trees to 48,000 trees. Business was good, and farmers made lots of _____ for their unique tasting fruits.

As time went on, people wanted all of their _____ to look the same. In the northwest, the state of Washington began producing lots and lots of _____ that were bright, red, and uniform in size. Because this is what people wanted. The growers in Southwest Colorado began planting the same trees, but they didn't grow as well in our climate. Growing _____ in Montezuma County was no longer a profitable business. _____ growers stopped

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THE HISTORY OF FRUIT TREES IN MONTEZUMA COUNTY

