

AUGUST 2026



Northwest Center
FOR SMALL FRUITS RESEARCH

THE NCSFR

SUMMER NEWSLETTER



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UPDATE FROM USDA-ARS

We would like to share important updates regarding changes to Northwest Center for Small Fruit (NCSFR) proposal process and other key developments within the Horticultural Crops Research Units. NCSFR proposals will now receive full funding for the entire duration of the project, effective September 1 of the first year through December 31 of the final year.

This year, nine proposals were recommended for full funding, with an additional proposal recommended for preliminary data. An earlier funding error was also corrected, bringing the total amount awarded to \$1,979,409.

This past year, a new Ag Research Information & Educational Library (ARIEL) management system, created by Northwest Berry Foundation (NBF), was released. While the system has improved proposal handling, incomplete submissions have delayed the proposal process. Moving forward, ARIEL will require complete and correctly formatted proposals for review.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that Drs. David Bryla and Walt Mahaffee are now permanent Research Leaders for the Horticultural Crops Production and Genetic Improvement Research Unit (HCPGIRU) and Horticultural Crops Disease and Pest Management Research Unit (HCDPMRU). Please join us in congratulating Dave and Walt on their new appointments.



UPDATE FROM THE NORTHWEST BERRY FOUNDATION

We're excited to announce the [new 2026 NCSFR funded projects](#). We're thankful for everyone that maneuvered through ARIEL, the new research collaboration platform, and for providing input on future enhancements as it transitions out of beta.

ARIEL was developed independently by an NBF employee (during her hard earned time off) as an attempt to solve the pain points of prior grant management systems that didn't quite address all our needs or provide space for research and project collaboration. Built directly on user and administrator insights, ARIEL gives our community a platform tailored specifically to our work.

In addition to NBF providing input for ARIEL that was used this year, we have redesigned the NCSFR [website](#) to close the long-standing communication and educational gaps that existed between researchers, growers, industry stakeholders, and the broader public. Previously, the website information was scattered and consisted of highly technical funding language that made it difficult for users to quickly understand the NCSFR's purpose, impact, and role within the Pacific Northwest specialty crop industry. The new website architecture reworks this experience through a storytelling approach that prioritizes clarity and accessibility.

Key elements such as funding programs, committee structures, conference expectations, and research outcomes are now easier to navigate for all audiences. We have included a complete funding lifecycle that shows researchers how their projects move from proposal to in-field application for our grower community.

The website now serves as an educational platform showcasing research impact and collaboration opportunities, while also integrating with the ARIEL platform for improved accessibility to funding and regional collaboration.

2026 FUNDING UPDATE

To Our New Awardees:

We want to extend our sincere congratulations to [everyone approved for funding this cycle!](#)
We look forward to seeing your research in action.

To Those Not Funded This Round: While we couldn't fund every project this time, we want to thank you for your hard work and contribution to the industry. We highly encourage you to refine your proposals and apply again when our portal reopens this fall.

View Awardees

View this year's awardees on the NCSFR portal on [ARIEL](#).

THE ANNUAL NCSFR CONFERENCE

 17-18 November 2026

 The Dalles, Oregon.

[VIEW AGENDA](#)

[VIEW TICKETS/HOTEL ROOM DETAILS](#)

OUR LATEST FACT SHEETS



BLACKBERRY

Assessing the role of *Gnomoniopsis idaeicola* and other fungal cane blight pathogens in Blackberry Collapse

[VIEW](#)



OTHER SPECIALTY CROP

Identifying Huckleberry Pollinators and the Impact of Soil Amendment Treatments

[VIEW](#)



GRAPE: VITICULTURE

Understanding the Onset of Systemic Infection of Red Blotch Virus and Phenotypic Studies of Grapevines Expressing a Red Blotch Virus Infectious Clone

[VIEW](#)



GRAPE: WINE & JUICE

Evaluation of Novel Cold Hardy Grape Rootstocks for Use in the Pacific Northwest

[VIEW](#)