



Truffle Association of British Columbia

Fall 2006

Greetings from the directors:

President: Sharmin Gamiet
Vice President: Quentin Wyne
Secretary: Richard Winder
Treasurer: Sue Gordon
Newsletter Editor: Shannon Berch

Update of the Research Project Submitted to the Agroforestry Management Committee (AMC)

In the fall of the 2004, TABC submitted a research proposal to the above committee requesting funding to establish a Perigord black truffle demonstration plots in BC. Earlier this year, the proposal was provisionally accepted for funding. The committee had four concerns regarding the proposal and required further clarification. They were:

- ensuring that all funds were managed through TABC;
- all sites located on producers operations were accessible for demonstration purposes;
- identify proposed activities that were incremental to standard farming practices;
- Confirm that the Hazelnut Association was supportive of the research project.

The research committee consisting of Shannon, Wayne, Quentin and Sharmin have addressed the above concerns. We are grateful to Dave Lestock-Kay for providing a letter of support. In early September the responses to the concerns were sent to AMC who will discuss the proposal in their October meeting. All conditions have been removed and the research project will be funded so we can proceed with the project next spring.

Truffles is the Latest Form of Agriculture to Hit Lake Country

Founded in 2005 by Quentin and Catherine Wyne, Okanagan Truffle Trees is poised to kickstart the high-end fungi industry in Canada.

By Graeme Corbett

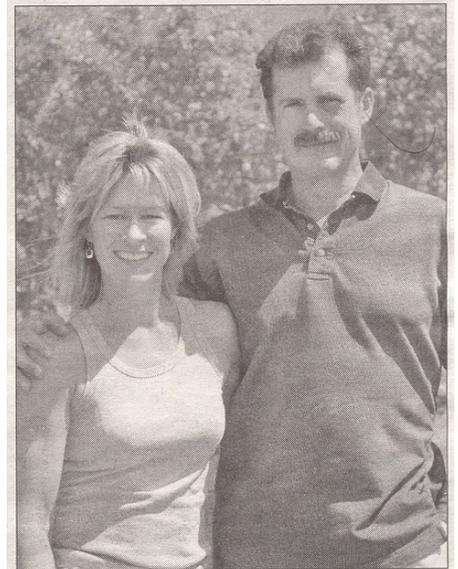
Lake Country News
July 2006

What does the average person know about truffles? Some might say there're like a mushroom that grows underground and that you need a pig to find them. Others might add that there're highly sought after by chefs and food buffs, but have never tasted them because they're exorbitantly expensive.

While there is truth to these statements, that isn't the entire picture. Just like truffles themselves, there is more beneath the surface.

As Quentin and Catherine Wyne explain, part of the reason for the mystery surrounding truffles is that many truffieres (the people producing them) have chosen to keep the knowledge to themselves. The Wyne's however, have other ideas.

"People producing them are very tight-lipped," says Mrs. Wyne. "We're determined to bring it mainstream."



When they moved into their Oyama-based orchard in 2003, Quentin and Catherine Wyne knew they wanted to diversify from the typical tree fruit industry.

It is partially due to this lack of sharing that world wide truffle production is on the decline. Urban sprawl, a lack of interest in farming from youth and environmental factors such as acid rain have also contributed to this downturn.

Yet, demand is on the rise. Recognizing this, entrepreneurs are pioneering new markets in places like New Zealand, Tasmania, Chile, the United States and now Canada.

The Wyne's interest in truffles became piqued while visiting other regions of BC in their quest to relocate from Vancouver. On one particular flight, Mrs. Wyne recalls picking up a copy of the in-flight magazine and reading an article about truffles and how they were being introduced to New Zealand.

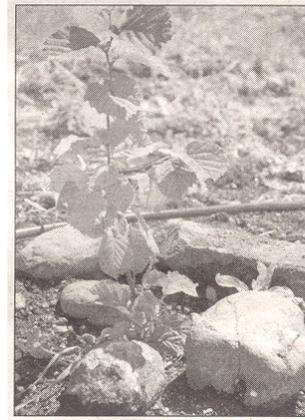
After further investigation, they came into contact with an Oregon based truffiere who helped them understand the industry and what it takes to get started. They soon discovered that the ten acres they purchased in Oyama were suited to growing truffles.

By 2005, they had formed Okanagan Truffle Trees, becoming the first commercial producer and distributor of seedlings inoculated with truffles in Canada. By spring 2006, the first seedlings were planted in the ground and another batch was ready to ship to interested buyers.

The Wyne's grow three types of trees that lend themselves well to growing truffles – Hazelnut, English Oak and Holly Oak. The former takes between five and seven years to yield a crop, while the latter two take between seven and ten years.

The trees they supply need to be sufficiently colonized with the right amount and type of mycorrhizae (fungus strain) needed to produce truffles. "To make sure you have the right truffle on the plant, you have to look at it on a molecular level," says Mr Wyne.

To help ensure this, they are working in cooperation with UBC researchers to make sure their product has every chance of being successful once it is planted, as there are no guarantees.



It may not look like much now, but in as little as five years time this diminutive hazelnut sapling could be harbouring some very sought after truffles amongst its roots.

Truffles typically reside about one foot underground, and, depending on the type, are harvested in different times of year. Black truffles are harvested during a two-week period in winter, which can present a problem if the ground is frozen because they can easily be damaged. "If it's a mild winter, we're dancing," says Mr. Wyne.

Traditionally, pigs were used to sniff out truffles, which produce pheromones when they are in season. The only problem is, it isn't easy to stop a pig from eating the truffles once it finds them. On the other hand, a dog with the proper training is just as capable and it will fit in the back of a car.

The unique flavour and aroma combined with the shape and structure and the fact that demand is so high make truffles a very sought after food. There are also those who believe truffles have aphrodisiac properties, which doesn't hurt either.

Mrs. Wyne says truffles can be added to just about anything, but says they are best in dishes that aren't too overpowering. She lists dishes such as risottos, seafood, scrambled eggs and even ice cream as being good matches for truffles.

Of course, while truffles are renowned for being high on flavour, they are equally known for being high on price. Certain types of truffle have been known to sell for up to \$4,000 per kilogram.

While truffles may not be on your weekly grocery list, if ever you did want some, in the foreseeable future you won't have to travel far to get them. On the other hand, you could just grow your own.

www.oyamagardens.com

Sniffing out a British truffle bonanza

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/food/Story/0,,1854798,00.html>

Bumper summer harvest defies perils of heatwave
Clamour to profit from its flavour and availability

David Ward
The Guardian
Monday August 21, 2006

They are one of the world's least promising-looking delicacies, sniffed out by pigs in rural corners of Europe, sold for thousands of pounds a kilo and prized above almost every other foodstuff by gourmards. They are also - in their more humble, native form - lurking in record numbers in British woodlands.

The UK appears to be experiencing a bumper harvest of the native summer or Burgundy truffle at a time when other crops in the south have been wilting through a heatwave and drought.

"We seem to have an apparent abundance," said Nigel Hadden-Paton, a truffle expert who had a sensationally successful day last week searching for culinary gold in a wood at a secret location in Wiltshire. He suggests that there are rich pickings to be had on soils scattered between Dorset and Darlington.

"It's extraordinary," he said. "It may be something to do with global warming but I just don't know. It may be a flush lasting two or three weeks and that will be it."

Mr Hadden-Paton runs Truffle UK, a company which cultivates truffles and imports them from France, Italy and Croatia. "The percentage of the population of Britain that eats truffles is minuscule and I'm trying to reverse that trend because truffles are here under our feet in our copses and woods."

British fungi sell for £130 a kilo, compared with last season's cost of an Italian *Tuber magnatum* (£2,000 a kilo) or Perigord *Tuber melanosporum* (up to £1,000 a kilo).

"Because it is less favoured, the price of the truffle found in Britain is lower," added Mr Hadden-Paton. "If you were to put the three truffles side by side and had risottos made, they would all taste different.

"The summer truffle found in Britain is a much more subtle and delicate flavour but I would not say it is better or worse. We need to educate people's palates and get them used to our indigenous truffle."

The British truffle is also easier to find: continental varieties lurk several centimetres underground as they search for water, but the native truffle often breaks through the surface, even if it can be mistaken at first sight for dog excrement.

Gill Butterfill, the British Mycological Society's representative at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, said conditions were perfect for truffle-hunting.

"They're mainly around in the autumn," she said. "The weather is already starting to change - it's getting cooler and moister now." Ms Butterfill added that Britons finally seemed to be catching up other Europeans when it came to appreciating truffles.

And there was, she suggested, a simple explanation for that change. "People are just greedy, aren't they? Truffles can feed your stomach or your wallet - they sell for a lot by the pound."

Paul Thomas, a truffle entrepreneur who plans to introduce commercial cultivation of both British and Perigord varieties on British plantations this year, said he wanted to work with a network of farmers to set up a cooperative selling the produce. "We have this grand vision of re-establishing the once-thriving UK truffle industry, which died out about 150 years ago. We hope to let people see that it is a natural UK crop," he said.

But anyone indulging in truffles should be aware of what they may be letting themselves in for: a 13th-century papal encyclical is said to say priests and nuns who ate truffles should not be held accountable for breaking vows of chastity.

Tassie Farmer Sends Truffles to Europe

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=118587>

Monday July 31, 2006

The French told him it could never be done, but Tasmanian farmer Tim Terry has proved them wrong. Now European truffle connoisseurs may be able to dine on their culinary "black gold" - truffles - all year round thanks to his enterprise and determination. Mr Terry, of Tasmanian Truffle Enterprises, sent his first shipment to Europe this month and says the response was "a shining light" for Australia's truffle industry. Truffles are a winter crop, and Mr Terry has become the first Tasmanian truffle farmer to take advantage of the lack of local produce during the European summer.

"They were very excited," he said. "The quality was excellent, as good as they get in Europe.

"Now we've proven that the quality is good enough for the northern hemisphere and dispelled a lot of myths ... that our truffles tasted like eucalyptus ... they are over the moon with it and they want to know how they can get a hold of more," he said.

Mr Terry, a former wheat, sheep and vegetable farmer, harvested Australia's first black truffle near Deloraine in Tasmania's north in 1999. The Black Truffle of Perigord, or *Tuber melanosporum*, is the most coveted of the truffle varieties and has an aroma strong enough to permeate egg shells when the two are stored together. The fungus currently fetches about \$2,400 per kilogram but Mr Terry expects it to settle at between \$1,500 and \$2,000 for first-grade fungi as Australia moves into the world market.

Despite their worth, Mr Terry said the challenge of growing truffles in Tasmania - something the French said could never be done - was the most exciting part of the venture. The fungus is grown on the roots of oak trees and sniffed out by specially trained dogs when it matures.

"You can't see, smell or touch them until the day they mature," Mr Terry said. "You really don't know what you've got until you've got them and so that's the exciting thing. For me it's never been about the money, it's the challenge."

And while his 12-year-old daughter "unashamedly" eats truffled eggs for breakfast each day, Mr Terry said he hardly ate the delicacy at all. "If you live with it for long enough you take it a bit for granted," he said. If he did indulge, Mr Terry said truffles were best in a simple meal of mashed potato and eye-fillet steak, "or if I happen to be able to sneak a bit of my daughter's eggs".

Truffles from the first European shipment were used in Spain and France and Mr Terry said he expected the relationship to build in the future. "We're not in the business of competing with the French, we try to work in harmony," he said. "It's a beautiful marriage, a real niche market opportunity for both countries."

DNA Analyses Confirm New Truffle in New Zealand

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU0608/S00087.htm>

Press Release: Crop and Food Research

August 3, 2006

DNA analyses confirm new truffle in New Zealand

DNA analyses have confirmed that a bianchetto truffle (*Tuber borchii*) has indeed been grown as part of a trial plot at Crop & Food Research's Lincoln facility. Last month the truffle industry was delighted to hear from Crop & Food Research that a trial plot had probably produced the first bianchetto truffle grown in the Southern Hemisphere. The truffle had been found under a three-year-old *Pinus pinea* tree.

"One of our scientists, Professor Yun Wang, was able to inspect the truffle and conclude under the microscope that it was a bianchetto, but we needed the DNA analyses to be 100 per cent sure," edible fungi leader Alexis Guerin said. He said researchers were delighted with the find because one of the aims of the research was to combine forestry and truffles. "Farmers are able to produce timber and truffles from a single plot of earth," Dr Guerin said. "It is all about adding value."

Crop & Food Research's senior business manager Graham Smellie says the find has been welcomed by New Zealand's truffle industry. "Small existing bianchetto truffières are scattered throughout NZ, from the North Island's east coast to the lower South

Island. This is an indication of the versatility of the borchii species,” Mr Smellie said. “There has been a huge demand for borchii infected trees.”

Oregon Truffle Festival in Eugene Oregon, January 26-28, 2007

From Dr. Charles Lefevre

Planning for this year's Oregon Truffle Festival kicked into high gear this month with commitments from Phillipe Boulot and Vitaly Paley, two James Beard Award winning chefs, who will prepare two of the five courses for the Grand Truffle Dinner, and a simultaneous commitment from Christine Fischer and Dr. Carlos Colinas who are returning from Spain to teach the second annual Truffle Cultivation Seminar. We are also working to organize the first annual Truffle Grower's Forum as part of the Festival, with guest lecturers focusing on current events in the truffle world as well as issues specific to growing and marketing truffles in North America. Like last year, the festival will offer a mycological lecture series for the public, an artisan foods marketplace, truffle dog demonstrations, wine tasting, cooking demonstrations and a weekend of grand delicacies. Program and package options will be available soon at www.oregontrufflefestival.com.

Wayne Haddow, Vancouver Island Agrologist, attended the 2006 Oregon Truffle Festival provided the following comments.

The workshop provided excellent information relevant to the development of truffiers in British Columbia. Two European scientistists delivered the workshop: Dr. Carlos Colinas, faculty member of the University of Llieda and Christine Fischer, researcher at the Forest Technology Centre of Catolina. Both individuals have presented courses of 3 weeks duration on truffle cultivation to Spanish Farmers.

Relevance to British Columbia: A number of BC farmers have planted test orchards/truffiers of English Oak and Hazelnut inoculated with the highly valued Perigord Black truffle (*Tuber Melanosporum*) to determine if the truffle can survive in the southwest region. Note: the truffle mycorrhizae forms a symbiotic relationship with the host tree.



Dr. Carlos Colinas Grating Truffles



Christine Fischer & Carlos Preparing Samples

Photos provided by Shannon Berch who also attended the Oregon Truffle Festival.

Key factors to consider in site selection: Soils, Competition Management, Irrigation, Weather/Climate, and Elevation.

Major concerns to the developing industry:

- Using the right species of tuber for inoculations: Tuber *brumale* looks very similar to *T melanosporum*, however is worth 1/5th the value.
- When purchasing to *T melanosporum* from importers often it is not to *T melanosporum* at all.
- *T brumale* is very competitive and once in a truffier, or on a trees root system it is nearly impossible to get rid of short of removing the soil and tree from the site

Truffle Orchards Workshop in Juva, Finland, October 16-18, 2006

From Dr. S. Shamekh, Chairman

Commercial truffle orchards have lately been established in many countries such as Sweden, Denmark, and New Zealand. Different species of white and black truffles are suitable for commercial cultivation depending on ecological conditions, climate, soil properties and host plants. We invite scientists as well as truffle and mushroom companies to discuss various aspects of establishing new truffle orchards and the techniques to increase the truffle crop.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.tkk.fi/Units/BioprocessEngineering/TruffleWorkshop/Truffles.htm>

Aolmaia Tuscany Society 2006 calendar of the Truffle Festivals:

<http://www.aolmaia.com/truffle.html>

23-24 September in Palaia

1 October in Corazzano

14-15 October in Balconevisi

29-29 October in Montaione

4-5 November in Volterra

11-12, 18-19, 25-26 November in San Miniato

The National White Truffle Show of San Miniato, Italy November 2006

The white truffle is a fungus so rare and exquisite in taste that there is a black market for the delicacy. The Tuscan town of San Miniato produces 25 percent of the world's white truffles, and the November Tartufo Show brings the hills alive with music, theatre, craft markets and, of course, truffles on local restaurants' menus.



Web Sites of Interest to the Truffle Community

Truffle Association of British Columbia

www.bctruffles.org

New World Truffieres, Inc.

Truffle Cultivation Specialists

www.truffletree.com

To view a report on 'French Black Truffle: establishment and production in Tasmania':

www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/NPP/01-084.pdf

New Zealand Truffle Association

www.southern-truffles.co.nz

North American Truffle Society

www.natruffling.org

Truffles UK

www.truffle-uk.co.uk



Upcoming Local Events

(Cut out for your fridge)

November 17

**Truffle Association of British Columbia
Fall Meeting**

Topics – Promoting Truffles
University of BC – South Campus
More information will be posted at
www.bctruffles.org

January 26 - 28

2nd Annual Oregon Truffle Festival
For information see:
www.oregontrufflefestival.com

**Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Personal Information Protection Policy**

Effective January 1, 2004 the BC PIPA Act came into effect. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has always taken great care in protecting the confidentiality and privacy of our customers, suppliers and vendors.

The ministry collects and uses personal information about individuals as needed and will only collect, use and disclose such personal information in a manner that would be considered reasonable under the circumstances.

If you wish to become a member or submit an article for the next newsletter, please direct a phone call, letter, fax or email to:

Sue Gordon, Office Manager
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Access Centre - 5785 Duncan Street
DUNCAN BC V9L 5G2

Phone: (250) 746-1210 **Fax:** (250) 746-1292
Email: Sue.Gordon@gov.bc.ca

**Truffle Association of British Columbia
Membership Information**

Memberships are yearly to be renewed by the end of April and mailed to:

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Access Centre - 5785 Duncan Street
DUNCAN BC V9L 5G2

Name:

Business Name:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Fax Number:

Email Address:

Web Site Address:

Yearly Membership \$20 _____

Yearly Family Membership \$25 _____