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Phoenix Female Farmer: Turning Adversity to Opportunity: Janna Anderson started Pinnacle Farms when she purchased a Phoenix citrus orchard in 2011.



Janna Anderson started Pinnacle Farms in 2011 with seven acres she purchased as a Phoenix homesite abandoned after the 2008 recession that was originally part of a citrus orchard in the 1930s. Now she grows peaches and the farm arm has grown to 47 acres total.

“I have planted over 800 trees on the property, mostly stone fruit, but also citrus, and there is an acre of land for the heritage grains project nursery,” says Anderson. “I also lease a 40-acre parcel in Waddell where I grow heritage grains and vegetables on a larger scale. I became certified organic in 2015 after years of following the organic principles, but not wanting to add to the expense or my paperwork burden.”

“There is something really special about the daily walks through the farm to inspect the progress and plan the following week. Just last week, I harvested some beautiful rare Navajo Red Watermelons and it’s so gratifying to know you have participated in preserving the diversity of the food system by helping to provide the seed for people and discussion as to

“As the orchard grows, it is becoming my favored place, not only for the shade, but because of all the work invested and how successful being a peach farmer has been so far! Lots of growers do vegetables, but very few sell peaches and the one thing people remember fondly from their childhood over and over is biting into a juicy yard peach!

“There is a serious learning curve to being an orchardist or vegetable farmer. Without a farming background, I didn't have family to turn to when faced with learning how to do something. Many of the long-term farmers have a recipe for success handed down to them over the years, and that experience makes them immediately successful. My success comes by trial and error, and the path is long and fraught with failures at times, too.

“My biggest reward comes from the appreciation and fascination that people have when I say I am a farmer. As we all know, the patriarchal vision of farming is what we have been accustomed to, but the truth is women have been in farming for a very long time, just overshadowed by their husbands or family.”

For more information, call 602-448-7008 or visit PhoenixPinnacleFarms.com.

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