PROFILES IN
soil health

Troy Keolanui
Hilo, Hawaii
Operation : macadamia nut
Practices: mulch and composting

Local Farmer Nuts Over Soil Health

Troy Keolanui is a macadamia nut farmer who runs OK Farms on the island of Hawaii. When they took over the 500 acres of land at the turn of the century, OK Farms added organic matter in all of their plantings to improve soil health. Troy is being a great land steward so future farmers may continue farming long after him.

" In one word, soil health is 'important' because it's a big benefit in the long run."

- Troy Keolanui, Hawaii Farmer

Making the Change

Traditionally in Troy's cultural upbringing, using organic matter was a normal practice. OK Farms uses less chemical fertilizer and he sees the fertilizer last throughout the year. Prior to OK Farms, the land was in sugar cane production for hundreds of years and Troy found it necessary to rebuild soil health.

The Practices

With Conservation Technical Assistance, Troy was able to implement mulching as weed and erosion control, plus composting to increase the nutrients in his soil. He recognizes that it takes a lot of sacrifice, labor, time, and energy to build healthy soil but it certainly has long lasting results.

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Healthy Results

In comparing soil health practices now to the traditional farming of generations before, Troy observes the long lasting effects on the macadamia nut trees as he uses less chemical fertilizer. He believes that the land isn't 'ours' and that there will be other farmers after him so he's doing his part to take care of the land now.

Troy says, "There is always something that folks can learn about keeping soil healthy. We want to make sure that there's enough organic matter to sustain itself. New methods are coming out all the time. Through NRCS, information is available and together, we are doing great things for soil health."

Mulching under the macadamia nut trees help to keep moisture in the soil.

Contact

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Healthy macadamia nut trees at OK Farms.

Close up of macadamia nuts on the tree.

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