ContainerPower Energy Solutions

Solar panels in the orchard

Overview

A small experimental apple orchard at Cornell’s Hudson Valley Research Laboratory may soon be topped by solar panels – which would not only track the sun to capture energy but provide a warm canopy on cooler spring days and shade the trees from excessive heat.Could solar power a small apple orchard be topped by solar panels?

DiTommaso and Grodsky are faculty fellows, and Zhang is a senior faculty fellow at the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability. A small experimental apple orchard at Cornell’s Hudson Valley Research Laboratory may soon be topped by solar panels, which would capture the sun’s energy and may prove beneficial to the trees.

Could a 300 kilowatt solar system cover 100 apple trees?

The research lab proposes to install a 300-kilowatt solar arrangement next spring to cover about 1,100 apple trees. The single-axis movable energy array 12 feet above the ground to take advantage of the land by producing food and power.

Can agrivoltaics protect apples from hail?

Agrivoltaics – the idea of growing viable crops while concurrently harnessing the sun’s energy with solar panels – is not a new concept. Buono and his colleagues aim to demonstrate how the panels can be used to protect growing apples from extreme weather, including hail, in a changing climate.

Can a solar farm grow strawberries?

Cornell graduate student Dana Russell plants strawberries in early September at a commercial solar farm in Ravena, New York. It is one of the active agrivoltaic research projects - the idea of growing crops while harnessing the sun's energy - around the state.

Can agricultural mesh simulate solar panel conditions?

To simulate solar panel conditions, for now, the researchers have installed agricultural mesh at three different heights to learn how the young, densely packed dwarf trees and fruit respond. A mesh shade cloth covers young apple trees at Cornell's Hudson Valley Research Lab in Highland, New York.

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