


Growing Organic



Jerry Baird of Grainger County has committed his estate, estimated at \$4 million, to the Institute of Agriculture for the benefit of the Jerry Baird Organic Horticulture Research and Education Endowment in the Department of Plant Sciences.

Baird's devotion to organic practices and standards is clear when you visit his farm. He is quick to say "if it doesn't come from Mother Earth, it doesn't go on my farm" As Baird looked at the long term prospects for his farm, he noticed that other farms around the county were, in his words, "growing more houses than crops." He was determined that his plot of land be preserved as an organic farm in the future. By gifting his estate to UT, Baird has fulfilled his dream of helping organic farming practices in Tennessee while adding greatly to the Institute of Agriculture.

Baird's estate will one day fund the Jerry Baird Organic Horticulture Research and Education Endowment. The endowment will assist UT Agricultural Research, UT Extension, and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in organic farming research, teaching, and outreach.

Organic horticulture is an emerging venture for the Institute of Agriculture. Agricultural Research has dedicated property and other resources to organic farming research in the past several years, and two new faculty members are on board in Plant Sciences to oversee this program. Annette Wszelaki and Brandon Smith are attracting grants and contracts to assist the academic, research, and extension programs of the Institute of Agriculture in organic practices. Jerry Baird's generous commitment will be of great assistance to the future of this growing area of agriculture in Tennessee and across the country. —*Rhodes Logan*

