

Northern Nevada is home to state's only organic apple orchard

By Alyx Sacks, KRNV-TV

Al and Delane Pennington never farmed a day in their lives up until about eight years ago.

Now they've fallen into what they call a labor of love.

Nestled in the heart of Washoe Valley is a 1 acre-rarity.

"Can you imagine a more beautiful spot than here," Al Pennington says.

The Apple Basket is the only organic apple picking orchard in Nevada.

The Penningtons have operated the orchard about a year after they bought it, but spring freezes the last two years have forced it to stay closed.

Last weekend they got to re-open.

"You know it's a lot of work and my wife and I do it all and we enjoy it just love having the people come out here," Pennington says.

Apple lovers are enjoying it too.

"It's a tradition for my family being from the east coast that we get to use great grandma's recipe and make some apple sauce," Tracy Jung says.

There's some 200 trees full of golden delicious', braeburns, cameos, and galas to choose from.

The apples are \$1.50 a pound.

They're certified organic; therefore no pesticides and no oils are used to treat them.

According to the USDA, the average cost this year in September for organic apples ranged from at least a \$1.72 on up to \$2.54.

"You don't even have to buy them at a store you come here and pick them and you save money," Elise Draeger says.

So what does it take to be the only organic apple picking orchard in Nevada?

Pennington says a lot of hard work.

Including constantly removing dead apples and debris under the trees and that helps with pest control.

The Penningtons also use chickens to help clear up unwanted pests.

All their methods seem to be working.

"It was really fun and I think everyone should do it," Draeger says.

The Pennigtons hope to keep the orchard open until the end of October.