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APPLICATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND MACHINE LEARNING IN FRUIT CROP MANAGEMENT: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are becoming potent tools in agriculture where they are considered as promoters for decision transforming making, automation, and precision control of crop production systems. Fruit crops, which are highly vulnerable to climatic fluctuations, pest and outbreaks, soil conditions, and management practices, were among those disease tech most impacted by the adoption of AI-based technologies. These high solutions bring fresh approaches to boosting productivity, quality and sustainability in horticultural production systems. In fruit crop production, AI can be applied to yield prediction, early disease and pest detection, harvest, and quality assessment precision irrigation and fertilization, robotic of fruits. Combining technologies, such as remote sensing, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and big data analysis, AI systems enable farmers and crop health, manage resources efficiently, and make scientists to track informed decisions. The recent studies reveal that AI-enabled technologies resource use efficiency, and facilitate better crop monitoring, increase promote sustainable agriculture. Nevertheless, there are multiple challenges to the adoption of AI and ML in fruit crop management despite their potential opportunities, such as high cost of implementation, limited availability of technology, and lack of awareness of high quality data, the complexity of the AI in horticulture is the high potential among growers. The adoption of expected to be boosted by continuous development of digital technologies, enhanced data availability, and enabling policy environment. In this review, we thoroughly discuss the applications, techniques, merits, demerits and future opportunities of AI and ML in fruit crop management with a special focus on generation of sustainable horticulture. their contribution in building the next

Keywords : Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Fruit Crops, IoT, Remote Sensing, Big Data, Sustainable Horticulture

Introduction

Despite fruit crops being essential for global food security, nutrition, and rural livelihoods, their production is under growing threat from climate change, biotic and resource use (Kutyauripo abiotic stresses, labor shortages, and poor *et al.*, empirical, can be 2023). Traditional management methods, which

tend to be insufficient in a rapidly changing environment (Yang and Xu, 2021). Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and other novel techniques provide new approaches for analyzing various big data generated by sensors, satellites, drones, and weather stations to model crop growth and make predictions about practices (Gul and

Banday, 2024; Arogundade crop yields and management and Njoku, 2024). These are now the cornerstone of precision agriculture with a capacity for real-time monitoring and predictive decision-making (Bandla *et al.*, 2024).

In fruit production, AI applications in pest and disease detection, yield prediction, soil fertility evaluation, and quality assessment have greatly enhanced productivity, sustainability (Keskes, 2025; Corceiro resource-use efficiency, and *et al.*, techniques are being developed as key instruments 2023). Therefore, AI-based for fostering robust and sustainable fruit production systems (Manonmani *et al.*, 2025; Ajith *et al.*, 2025).

Concept of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Agriculture

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence tasks associated (AI) is a computational system that can be used for performing with human intelligence, such as perceiving, learning, reasoning, and thinking apple production, AI facilitates data-driven and (Russell and Norvig, 2016). In automated orchard management based on the processing of multidimensional biological and environmental data (Russell and Norvig, 2016; Liakos *et al.*, fruit crops, AI serves as a combination of machine learning, sensors, 2018). In robotics, computer vision, remote sensing, and Internet of Things (IOT) that allows managers to monitor and manage orchards in real time and with precision (Kamilaris and Prenafeta-Boldu, 2018; Dhal *et al.*, 2022).

AI applications in fruit crops have been extended to predicting yield, detecting pest and disease, assessing soil fertility, scheduling irrigation, and evaluating fruit quality and field sensors (Yang with information collected from drones, satellites *et al.*, 2017; Xu *et al.*, 2023). AI enhances the productivity, resource-use efficiency, and sustainability of fruit production systems by enabling precision agriculture, and thus signifies the transition from orchard experience-based growers practices to intelligent, data driven management (Sharma and Gawade, 2025; Arora *et al.*, 2025).

Machine Learning

Machine learning is a subset of artificial intelligence that involves computers learning (ML) from data rather than being explicitly programmed. In fruit crops cultivation, ML methods are becoming widely applied to perform an analysis of large datasets related to climate, soil, plant health, and orchard man-

agement (Mohanty *et al.*, 2016; Sladojevic *et al.*, 2016). ML techniques Vector Machines (SVM), including Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Support Random Forest (RF), Gradient Boosting and deep learning models have found widespread application in horticulture for classification, regression and decision making applications. These models facilitate precision and robust solutions to tackle the complexity of fruit production systems (Chlingaryan *et al.*, 2022).

In fruit crops, deep learning methods, especially CNN, achieved high performance for detection of on image-based pests and diseases, fruit detection, and ripeness prediction early detection, and reduce the loss of yield data. These approaches facilitate caused by biotic stresses (Ferentinos, 2018; Too *et al.*, 2019). ML models also find their application in yield prediction, climate risk modeling and crop growth simulation by considering weather, soil and remote information. Such predictive analytics enable proactive decisions in sensing management. Thus, the use of ML in fruit crop management is a shift orchard toward intelligent, data-driven orchard systems instead of traditional experience-based systems. Owing to issues such as data availability, technical complexity and infrastructure, it is expected that ML-based approaches will have a significant impact on the future of smart and sustainable fruit production (Saiz-Rubio and Rovira-Mas, 2020).

AI and ML Techniques Used in Fruit Crop Management

Machine Learning Algorithms

The management of fruit crops through machine learning encompasses a broad range of methods, supervised, unsupervised, deep learning and reinforcement learning. Including among the most popular supervised learning algorithms used for SVM, ANN, RF are detection of diseases, prediction of yield, and quality evaluation. Component Analysis Unsupervised techniques, such as clustering and Principal (PCA) are used for identifying patterns and reducing the dimension of data learn features (Jolliffe and Cadima, 2016). Deep learning models are able to from the data itself, which consists of the raw sensor readings. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) are commonly used for crop disease and fruit quality are suitable for time series grading whereas Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) prediction. Vision Transformers bring nontrivial gain in accuracy but need resources (Stein significantly more computing *et al.*, 2016; Majdalawieh *et al.*, 2025). Reinforcement learning can be applied also for dynamic irrigation,

management, robotic harvesting systems (Chang *et al.*, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2025).

Data Sources for AI in Fruit Crops

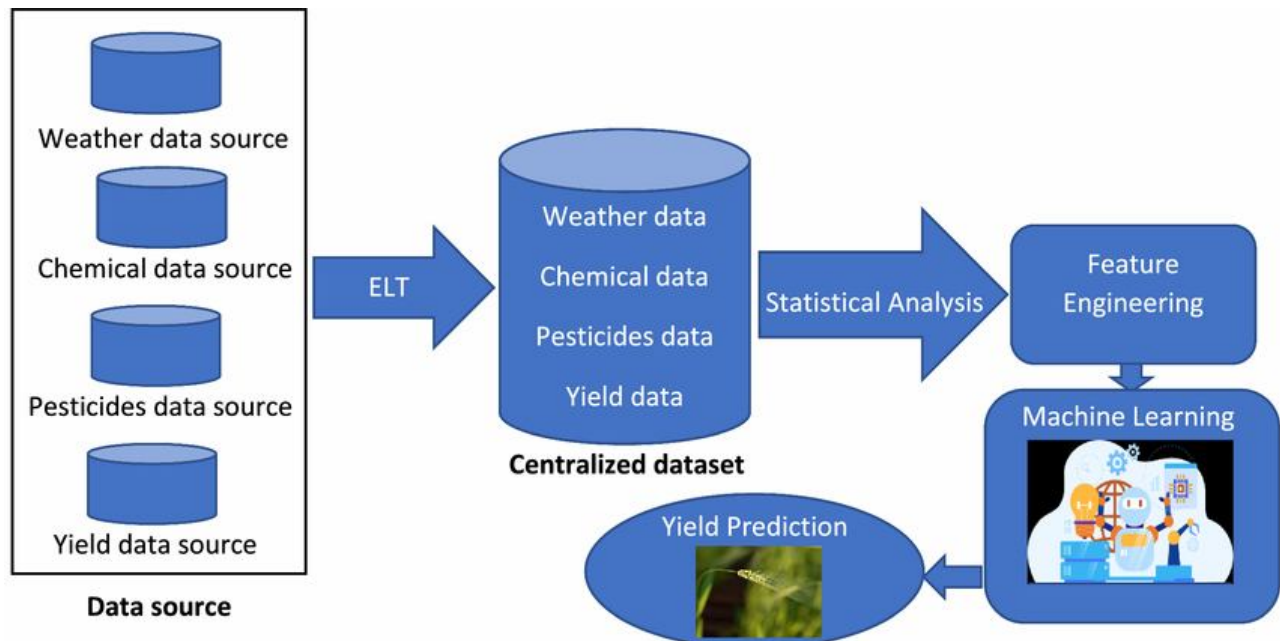
Applications of in the management of fruit crops are based on artificial intelligence heterogeneous and multidimensional data. Remote sensing-related data such as satellite, UAV images can provide orchard canopies, disease status, nutrient (Zhang *et al.*, 2021; Sun *et al.*, 2023). IoT enabled sensors monitor soil moisture, temperature, humidity, and stress detection (Rao *et al.*, 2023; Zhang *et al.*, 2017; Garcia *et al.*, 2020). Climatic information, being the critical input for yield forecasting, phenology risk analysis, is provided by automated weather stations and modeling and pest prediction models (Hoque *et al.*, 2024). Genomic and phenotypic datasets are increasingly combined through

AI approaches to associate genetic with traits such as disease resistance and fruit quality, variation facilitating data-driven breeding and rootstock selection (Liao *et al.*, 2025; Cembrowska-Lech *et al.*, 2023; Farooq *et al.*, 2024). conjunction, these multi-source data establish the basis for intelligent and In precision fruit crop systems.

Applications of AI and ML in Fruit Crop Management

Yield Prediction

are used to AI models process historical weather data, soil conditions, and crop growth signals to forecast fruit yield (Malashin *et al.*, 2024; Liu *et al.*, 2025; Goel and Pandey, 2024). ML-based yield predictions allow the farmers to refine their economics (Ajith input usage and to better plan *et al.*, 2025; Mishra and Srivastava, 2025).



Source : Talaat, 2023

Fig. 1 : AI/Machine Learning based yield prediction framework showing integration of weather, soil, and crop data to forecast agricultural yield.

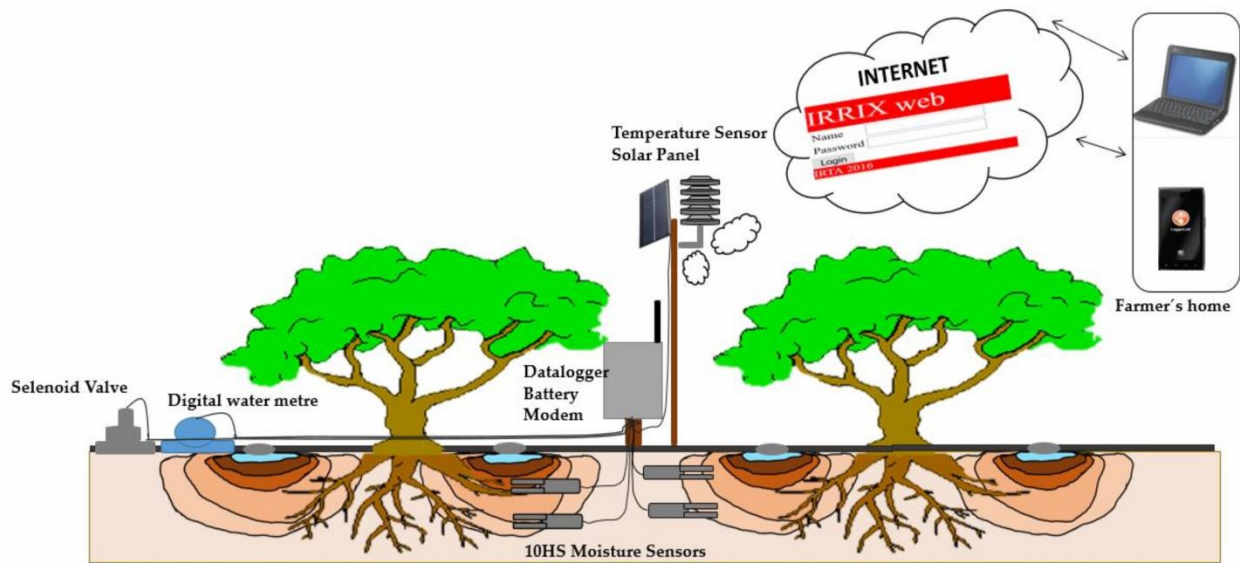
Pest and Disease Detection

detection is Disease one of the best employments of AI-based techniques in fruit crops. Deep learning models have been shown to achieve high accuracy in detecting diseases from leaf images (Reddy and Kumari, 2026; Khan *et al.*, 2022; Khattak *et al.*, 2021). For instance, computer vision-based AI systems have been detection in orchards to decrease crop losses by

introduced for in situ pest early intervention (Singh and Butail, 2026; Albanese *et al.*, 2021).

Precision Irrigation and Nutrient Management

Deficit irrigation scheduling and nutrient application are optimized using AI models with soil moisture and weather data, leading to enhancement of resource use efficiency (Adeyemi and crop yield *et al.*, 2018; Navarro-Hellin *et al.*, 2016; Dominguez-Nino *et al.*, 2020).



Source : Millan *et al.*, 2019

Fig. 2 : AI-Based Smart Irrigation and Soil Moisture Monitoring System for Precision Orchard Management

Crop Monitoring and Phenotyping

Remote sensing and AI (Furuya can be used for continuous monitoring of crop growth and stress *et al.*, 2024; Omia *et al.*, 2023). AI-based image analysis has been in applied to evaluate fruit maturity, canopy health and harvesting maturity mango, apple and lemon (Ma *et al.*, 2024; Zhao *et al.*, 2025).

Robotics and Automation in Orchards

AI-enabled robotic systems for pruning, harvesting, and orchard management are under development (Ahmed *et al.*, 2025; Navone *et al.*, 2025; Mortazavi *et al.*, 2025). Autonomous pruning robots have demonstrated the potential significantly reduce labor costs and increase precision in orchard to operations (Li and Ma, 2023).



Source: Bac *et al.* (2014)

Fig. 3 : Application of Artificial Intelligence in Automated Apple Harvesting

Climate Risk and Stress Management

Systems are in place allow the prediction of environmental stresses including drought and heat that stress, making possible the implementation of management strategies in advance. development of AI-

based crop risk monitoring systems for fruit crops (cranberry) The with high prediction performance has been reported (Akiva *et al.*, 2021; Ahmad, 2025; Patra *et al.*, 2025).

Table 1: Recent Applications of AI and Machine Learning in Fruit Crop Management

Application Area	AI / ML Techniques Used	Data Sources	Key Outcomes in Fruit Crops	References
Yield prediction	Deep Learning, Random Forest, Neural Networks	Weather data, UAV imagery, crop growth parameters	Predicting accurately enables improvement of inputs, harvest planning, and fruit yield marketing	Van Klompenburg <i>et al.</i> , 2020
Pest and disease detection	CNN, Vision Transformers, YOLO, Deep Learning	Leaf images, UAV images, smartphone images	The disease is detected early with an accuracy of >95%, thus minimizing losses and pesticide misapplication crop	Liu <i>et al.</i> , 2025; Zainab and Mahum, 2025
Fruit detection and maturity assessment	Computer Vision, CNN, YOLOv8	RGB images, drone imagery	Precise maturity detection for harvesting automation fruit counting, grading, and	Zhao <i>et al.</i> , 2024
Precision irrigation and stress monitoring	Machine Learning, IoT-based predictive models	Soil moisture sensors, weather stations	Improved water-use efficiency and reduced drought stress in orchards	Elshaikh <i>et al.</i> , 2024; Dong <i>et al.</i> , 2024
Orchard monitoring and phenotyping	Deep Learning, Remote sensing, Image segmentation	Satellite imagery, UAV, multispectral images	Monitoring growth, and nutrient status on-line of plant health, canopy	Popescu <i>et al.</i> , 2023; Huang <i>et al.</i> , 2024
Autonomous harvesting and orchard automation	Robotics integrated with AI, Computer vision	Vision sensors, robotics cameras	Reduced labour dependency and increased harvesting precision	Bac <i>et al.</i> , 2014
Climate stress and risk prediction	Machine learning, predictive analytics	Weather, soil, environmental data	Advance orchard hardiness notice of heat, drought, and stress enhances	Hobart <i>et al.</i> , 2024; Ali <i>et al.</i> , 2024; Geli <i>et al.</i> , 2025

Benefits of AI and ML in Fruit Crop Management

Advantages of AI-based devices include the following:

- Increased productivity and yield (Sudha and Loret, 2026)
- water and fertiliser use Reduction in (Soussi *et al.*, 2024)
- Pests and diseases can be detected at an and Prenafeta-Boldu, 2018) early stage (Kamilaris
- Decrease in labour dependence
- market price Improved fruit quality and (Koirala *et al.*, 2019)
- farming Environmentally friendly

AI tools contribute decisions and data-based farm management (decision also to support real-time making process) and, hence, digital agriculture (Wolfert *et al.*, 2017).

Socio-Economic and Practical Implications

New programmes and interest in applying AI in agriculture. As an activities show the increasing crop example, we have an outline of what AI-based tools for real-time monitoring and pest detection are going to allow us do that are going to help us to better optimize our resources and minimize losses. Nevertheless, the reluctant because of the high costs, shortage of technical adoption is still expertise and data (Geng *et al.*, 2024; Das and Nayak, 2024).

Challenges and Limitations

Technical Challenges

- Data and poor data quality Lack of
- Model generalization Cross-region
- Expensive Computationally

Economic Challenges

- High initial investment
- Limited access for smallholder farmers

Ethical and Social Issues

- Data privacy concerns
- Digital divide between farmers
- Dependence on technology

Future Perspectives

Emerging technologies like diffusion models and generative AI will benefit smart agriculture with image processing, data augmentation, and predictive analytics. Future enhanced research should consider:

- Integration of AI with genomics and phenomics
- of cost-effective AI tools Design for farmers
- AI models that integrate Hybrid diverse data sources
- guidelines and capacity Policy enhancement.

Conclusion

The AI and ML tools are the management of fruit crops. They improve now proven to be game changers in sustainability and resilience of fruit production systems the productivity, through enabling precision agriculture and predictive decision-making. current barriers, rising technological advancements and supportive Despite policies could foster the growth of AI adoption in hort. Management of fruit to crops using AI, therefore, marks a paradigm shift from traditional farming smart, data-driven agriculture.

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