WHOLE ORCHARD RECYCLING: EXPLAINED

Just like a tree decomposing in the forest provides nutrients to everything around it, researchers are exploring the potential for recycling whole almond trees back into the soil and the benefits this approach could bring to future orchard and soil health.

1. **ORCHARD REMOVAL:** At the end of their 25-year lifespan, almond orchards are removed, with each tree being ground up into small wood chips.

2. **SOIL INTEGRATION:** Instead of removing the wood chips from the orchard system for other uses, a whole orchard recycling approach means the chips are spread and disced into the soil prior to planting the next orchard.

3. **BREAKDOWN:** Over time, the wood chips decompose, releasing nutrients that the next orchard can use. What’s more, the chips add organic matter to the soil, increasing water infiltration and storage, as well as slowing the release rate of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere. Whole orchard recycling has the potential to prolong the benefits of sequestration and further offset emissions, moving almond farming closer to carbon neutral.