

All About Apples

With the Apple Harvest Festival being held this week I thought an article about apples was appropriate.

Apples are members of the rose family, or Rosaceae, and the genus *Malus*. Apples are pome fruits, a botanical classification meaning "fleshy fruits." Pears and quince are also pome fruits, as opposed to stone fruits, fruits with hard "stone" pits, like peaches, plums, apricots, and cherries.

The word pome comes from the French word *pomme* (which means apple, also the root of *Pomona*, the Roman goddess of fruits). Interestingly, the French word for potato is *pomme de terre*, or "apple of the earth." The science of apple growing is called pomology.

Apple trees were grown and prized for their fruit by the people of ancient Rome. Both the seeds of apples and the trees themselves were brought to America from England, probably in 1629. John Endicott, one of the early governors of Massachusetts Bay Colony, is said to have brought the first trees to America. The cultivated varieties of apples gradually spread westward from the Atlantic coast. Native Americans took seeds of these apples into the wilderness and planted them in their villages. A white man, John Chapman, also helped to spread apple growing in the U.S. He carried apple seeds with him wherever he went, and planted them in thinly settled parts of the country. For this reason he became known as "Johnny Appleseed."

As time passed, American apple growers developed many new and improved varieties of apples. Nearly 10,000 different kinds, or varieties of apples are grown in the world with more than 7,000 of these varieties grown in the U.S. These varieties are very different in shape, size, color, flavor and other qualities. Ripe apples may be green or one of many shades of red, or yellow, or any combination of these colors. Some apples have hard, sour flesh and are usually cooked before eating. Other types are tender and have a mild flavor and are better for eating raw.

Many varieties of cultivated apples are also descended from the wild crab apple of Siberia.

Apple blossoms are much like wild-rose blossoms. The fruits of the rose and the apple are also much alike in form. But apples are much larger than the dry seedy fruits of the rose.

A seed from an apple will usually grow into a tree if it is planted under satisfactory conditions. After a number of years the seedling tree will bear apples of its own. Generally these apples will be smaller and poorer than the apple from which the seed was taken. They may also be different in other ways from all other varieties of cultivated apples. For these reasons new apple trees are usually grown from buds. These buds are cut from a healthy apple tree which bears plenty of good apples of the kind the farmer wants. The buds are made to grow on strong roots of other apple trees by the process called budding. Budding is a kind of grafting. The apples these trees bear will be like the apples of the tree from which the twigs were cut. Budding permits the fruit grower to have as many trees as he wishes, all bearing exactly the same variety of apples.

Once in a while, however, it happens that an apple tree grown from seed is better than the parent tree in some important way. When such a superior apple seedling is found, it may become the parent tree for a valuable new apple variety.

The Number Five

The number five is important in the world of apples, and not just because apple is a five-letter word: Apple blossoms typically form in clusters of five . an apple blossom has five petals . Red Delicious apples usually have five bumps (lobes) on the base of the apple . The "star" you see when you cut an apple in half is due to the fruit's five seed cavities. Each cavity has the potential for 2 seeds, thus 10 seeds per apple are the norm.

Apples Are A Nutritious Snack

Apples are nutritious and delicious. Here are some important facts to remember when choosing a snack:

- A medium size apple has only 80 calories.
- Apples contain no fat. This helps reduce the risk of cancer
- Apples contain very little sodium which reduces the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.
- Apples are also cholesterol free.
- Apples are a good source of Vitamin A which benefits vision and bone and tooth development.
- Apples contain natural sugars called fructose.
- Apples have pectin and other fibers which reduce cholesterol levels and aid in digestion.
- Apples are a good source of complex carbohydrates which scientists believe may lower the risk of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.
- Apples contain potassium which may help keep blood pressure down.
- Apples contain the mineral boron which helps the body use calcium.
- Apples come in many varieties, each with their own special taste and texture. There are bound to be several that make your mouth water!

Next time you want a snack reach for an apple, it's good for you. Remember to buy local produce that tastes good. Local producers have a wide variety of apples for various tastes and uses.

Beltsville Agriculture Research Tour - November 4th

The Forum for Rural Innovation is sponsoring a one day bus tour of the USDA Beltsville Agriculture Research Center on November 4, 2009. The tour is being planned to highlight the innovative agriculture research of plants, animals, human nutrition, and the environment.

The Beltsville ARC is the largest USDA research facility in the United States, encompassing over 7,000 acres, and located at Beltsville, Maryland. It is a dynamic, highly diversified research facility, dating back to 1910. The tour will focus on agriculture industries and practices that can be implemented to our region, and highlight some of the historic research conducted at Beltsville. The tour bus will depart from Purcellville at 7:30 am and will return by 5:30 pm. All participants must pre-register and ride the bus. A \$35.00 per person registration fee will include bus transportation, snacks, and lunch. Registration is limited to 55 persons, and will be on a first-come first-served basis. Registration information is available at www.LoudounFarms.org or by calling 703-777-0426. This tour and the Forum for Rural Innovation are sponsored by the Offices of Agricultural Economic Development and Cooperative Extension -Loudoun, Fauquier, Clarke, Fredrick (VA), and Jefferson, Berkeley (WV), and the Shenandoah and Potomac Headwaters RC&D.

Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival Apple Displays and Contests

The 30th Annual Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival will feature Agricultural Displays and Contests at the Berkeley County Youth Fair Grounds Harry D. Shelley Park Martinsburg, WV Saturday, October 17, and Sunday, October 18, 2009. For more information on the Festival visit their website at:

<http://www.msahf.com/>

Shenandoah Valley Fiber Festival October 24-25

The Shenandoah Valley Fiber Festival will be held October 24-25 at the Clarke County Fairgrounds in Berryville, VA. Admission is \$5 per person. For more information on this event visit their website at <http://www.shenandoahvalleyfiberfest.com/index.html>

Berkeley County Youth Fair Basket Bingo

The Annual Basket Bingo will be held on Sunday, October 25, 2009. Doors will open at 12:00 noon with the Basket Bingo starting at 2:00 pm. Tickets will be available soon. If you would like to be a sponsor for this event, please email Dawn Pingley at dawnt@toast.net.

MGT-332: Agriculture and Food Vulnerability Assessment Training

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), WV Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety (DMAPS), WV Department of Agriculture, and the Jefferson County Development Authority are offering free Agriculture and Food Vulnerability Assessment Training through the DHS Direct Delivery Program. This training, which has been certified and approved by DHS/FEMA, will strengthen the ability of state and local communities and industry to improve intelligence and operational capabilities for prevention and deterrence of terrorist acts that target the agriculture and food sector.

This is a one and one-half day class that is open to the agriculture and food industry, federal, state, county, and local officials, extension and crop specialists, agriculture crime units, food processors, food transportation, food wholesalers and retailers, food distributors, health department officials, emergency managements agencies, meat and poultry inspection and all others involved with food and agriculture security planning.

When: November 10-11, 2009-- Beginning at 8:00 a.m. on November 10 and conclude at approximately 4:30 p.m. Class will resume at 8:00 on November 11 and conclude at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Where: West Virginia University Tree Fruit Research and Education Center 67 Apple Harvest Lane (Located On WV Route 9 in Jefferson County) Kearneysville, West Virginia 25403

Cost: No program fee. Lunch will be provided. WV Law Enforcement Training Committee has approved for 12 hours law enforcement in service hours. Travel and Lodging will be the responsibility of the attendee with NO reimbursement. Registration Deadline is Wednesday November 4, 2009.

If you have any questions or require any assistance please contact Roy McCallister or Matt Blackwood, (304)-558-2214 or rmccallister@ag.state.wv.us

Garden Tips

Seed spinach for overwintering

Turn compost

Seed arugula for overwintering

Prepare landscape bed for spring planting

Plant or transplant deciduous trees or shrubs after leaves drop

Mow lawn for last time

Until next time ...Happy Gardening and Farming!