

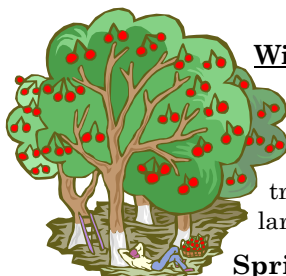


Junior Naturalist

Fall Ovenbird 2011

Pfeiffer Nature Center
Where Science, Art & Nature Come Together!

What is Happening in the Apple Orchard?



Winter

Like many living things, apple trees need to rest for part of the year. This resting time is called dormancy. In January, while the trees are dormant, pruning begins. Limbs are sawed off & clipped so that the tree gets as much sunlight as possible. Pruning allows the tree to produce larger, better colored, higher quality & more valuable fruit.

Spring

Spring is a busy time in the orchard. The most important spring activity is pollination, the process by which new apples begin to form on the tree. In the beginning of May, the buds begin to swell. Eventually, apple trees are covered with beautiful clusters of fragrant blossoms.

Summer

In June, small fruit begins to form. In some dry years, irrigation must be used during July. Fruit size & firmness are affected by moisture in this critical month. August is the last growing month before the apples begin to ripen. Apples need the assistance of cool nights during harvest to trigger an enzyme which increases the amount of color or "blush".

Fall

Apples bruise easily & must be hand picked. Additional harvest workers are hired both locally & from other areas to help get the crop in on time. Many apples are processed into sauce, pies, slices & dried snacks. Some apples are also pressed into fresh cider & processed apple juice. Certain apple varieties are designed specifically for this market.

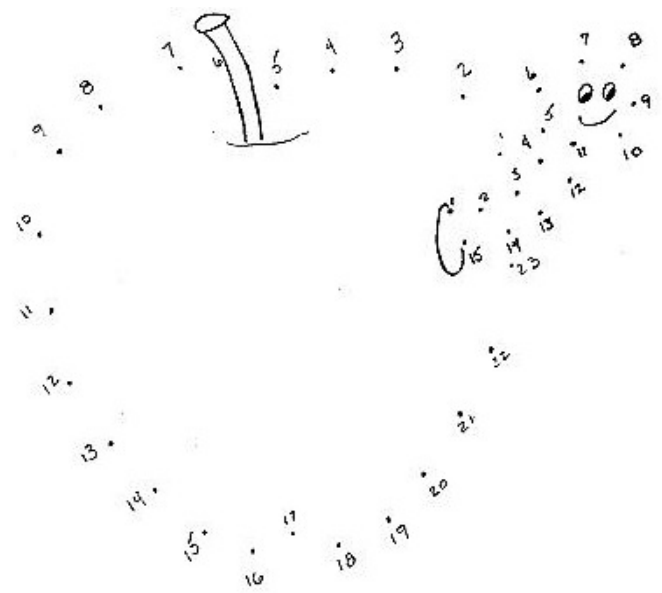
With harvest complete, it is time to prepare again for winter. Growing an apple takes all year, and there is always something going on in the orchard. If you look closely, you can even see the promise of next year's crop in the bud at the top of each branch in the snow.

How many words can you make from the words "Empire Apple"?

Hint:

There at least 23 words!

What is your favorite variety of apple? Not sure? Then, do your own taste test to find



Amazing Apple Facts



- * New York State produces an average of 25 million bushels of apples annually, making it #2 in the country
- * Apples are fat, sodium & cholesterol free with a medium apple having about 80 calories
- * Of the thousands of varieties of apples that were grown in the early 1900s, 88% do not exist anymore
- * It takes the energy from 50 leaves to produce 1 apple
- * Fresh apples float because 25% of their volume is air
- * Americans eat 19.6 pounds of apples every year
- * The apple was designated New York's state fruit in 1976
- * Two pounds of apples make one 9-inch pie
- * It takes 36 apples to create 1 gallon of apple cider
- * Apples are a member of the rose family of plants, along with pears, peaches, plums & cherries



Ovenbird Extra

Pfeiffer Nature Center
Where Science, Art & Nature Come Together!

Fall Ovenbird 2011

Guide for Judging, Buying and Storing Apples



How to Judge Apple Quality

- * Good color indicates full flavor. Don't be turned off by russetting, a tough reddish brown skin, on part of the apple: This will not affect eating quality or flavor.
- * Apples should be firm & free of bruises.
- * Check with the orchard to know what varieties are at the peak of ripeness. Apples picked before they are ripe will not ripen more once they are picked.

How to Store Apples



- * Most early apples are best for fresh eating, salads, fruit cups & desserts. Refrigerate them & use them within 3-4 weeks. They do not store well.
- * Apples bought in bulk should be stored in the hydrator or in a covered container in the fridge to maintain proper humidity.
- * Apples kept in a polyethylene bag in the fridge should be misted inside the bag periodically during storage.
- * With no fridge space available, keep apples in as cool a place as possible & line the basket with aluminum foil or plastic to prevent moisture loss. Covering the basket with a damp towel will also help increase humidity.
- * Polished red apples make a handsome centerpiece. But don't keep apples in the fruit bowl for days at a time. They will dry out, soften, lose flavor & develop a tough skin.
- * Prevent the natural browning that occurs when apples are cut by dipping the cut fruit in a mild solution of water & lemon juice, or sprinkle it with fresh lemon juice.



Guide to Buying Apples

Here is a table to help you calculate how many apples you need or can use. For reference, a medium apple is a little less than 3 inches in diameter.

Weight	Amount of Apples	Enough for
1 lb. apples	2 large, 3 medium or 4-5 small	3 cups peeled, sliced or diced
2 lb. apples	6-8 medium	1—9 inch pie
40 lb. apples	1 bushel or 120 medium	20—9 inch pies or 16-20 quarts of apple sauce