



Stewarding the Land for Future Generations  
Local, Sustainable, Organic

# Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

September 21st, 2006- Week 16

## Featured Fruit of the Week: Apple

The wild apple of ancient Asia produced hundreds of tiny fruits that were sour and consisted mostly of numerous, small, dark brown seeds and core. Though some historians are in dispute over exactly who first cultivated the wild apple, many believe it was the Romans who discovered they could cultivate them into fleshy, sweet, and juicy fruits. Some historians report the apple's origins were rooted in Southwestern Asia, just south of the Caucasus Mountains between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Others note that apple seeds found in Anatolia were carbon dated 6500 BCE. Archeologists even found a fossilized imprint of an apple seed from the Neolithic period in England.

In the 13th century BCE, Ramses II ordered cultivated varieties of apples planted in the Nile delta. In Attica, Greece, apples were being grown in a very limited quantity during the 7th century BCE. Pliny the Elder, a Roman statesman, circa 23 CE, described 37 different varieties of cultivated apples in his *Historia naturalis*. By the first century CE apples were being cultivated in every region throughout the Rhine Valley. Apple cultivation was gathering momentum. By the year 1640, horticulturist Parkinson noted 60 varieties, by 1669 the count was up to 92 varieties, and by 1866 Downing's *Fruits* notes 643 different cultivars.

The Colonists brought the apple with them to America in the form of seeds, often called pips. Early in 1629 the Boston Bay Company placed an order for apple seeds from England. Today, Michigan, Washington, and New York have become the commercial centers of apple production in the US, with the Pacific Northwest leading the pack, producing more than 35 million bushels a year. Apples grown in Washington state came to the west from the East Coast, and originally from England.

The apple derives its name from the Latin *pomum*, meaning fruit in English, and is classified as a pome, a fruit that has many tiny seeds within a core at the center. They belong to the pome group as opposed to the stone group, referring to the type of seeds contained in the fruit. What the Roman horticulturists accomplished over time was to establish a number of consistent varieties. By the 6th century BCE, they were boasting 7 different kinds of apples. As first described in *De Agricultura* by Cato the Elder, a 2nd century Roman statesman, they began by taking cuttings called "scions" from a tree that had desirable qualities and grafting these onto sturdy rootstocks. Branches then developed that produced these apples of good quality.

The Romans learned that in order to grow consistent varieties of apples, they must be cultivated by this method or they would revert back to one of the original parents, just as any hybrid fruit or vegetable would do.

The temperate zones of Europe, Asia, and North America are ideal for apple growing where the trees can rest during a cold, dormant period of about two months to recover from the work of producing an abundant crop. In more recent years, new varieties of apples have been developed that produce well in warmer climates.

Apples are one of the most popular fruits in the world. At present there are at least 7,500 different varieties that vary in shape, color, texture, firmness, crispness, acidity, juiciness, sweetness, nutritional value, and harvesting period. Easy on the digestion, apples contain and tartaric acids that inhibit fermentation in the intestines. Their high fiber content adds bulk that aids the digestive process, making elimination natural and comfortable. Apples contain pectin, a soluble fiber that encourages the growth of beneficial bacteria in the digestive tract.

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## Ask the Farmers...

CSA member Lucinda Weatherby asks, "What is the most satisfying part of farming for you?"

The most satisfying part of growing for me is working outside: waking up early in the quiet of the morning, greeting the sun, the morning dew, birds first songs, tending our livestock, seeing traces of wildlife's evening antics and drinking in the calm of the peaceful start of the day!



Don Tipping, Seven Seeds Farm



Steve Florin, Dancing Bear Farm

One of the most satisfying aspects of farming for me is knowing that the seed crop I grew last year could potentially be responsible for the production of almost a half million pounds of organic squash!

The most satisfying aspect of growing: that moment when I turn around and see that the lettuce I planted has gone from being just a little squirt seedling to a fast maturing plant ready to take on the world. First the seeds take a few days to sprout (or many, like carrots and parsnips take weeks) and you're looking at bare soil. Then, they are babies, tender and growing, but somehow still slow, until that moment when something shifts, and they take off, full of life. I feel a sense of relief that the plants made it and, at the same time, an acknowledgement and trust that life wants to flourish.



Eden Luz, Quartz Creek Farm



Tom Powell, Wolf Gulch Farm

The most satisfying aspect of farming is that the work I do has tangible results. Planting seeds results in food production, and food keeps me alive to plant more seeds. Planting seedlings creates orchards or re-establishes forests. The work has a direct impact on my survival and boils life down to the most basic, essential elements. I like that.

## Announcements

**\*Join us for our third Farm Day: Saturday September 30th from 11 am to 3 pm at Dancing Bear Farm in Williams.**

**Farmer Steve Florin will give a tour of the farm at 2 pm and will provide a large pot of chili. Bring plates, bowls and utensils and a potluck salad or dessert to share.**

Directions: From Highway 238, turn onto the Williams Highway in Provolt (coming from Ashland, Medford or Jacksonville this would be a left turn, from Grants Pass, a right hand turn.) Follow that road for about four miles. It will turn into Cedar Flat Road. Dancing Bear Farm is located at 3433 Cedar Flat Road. There is a gate, but no code to enter: just press the gray button.