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WestVirginiaUniversity
EXTENSION SERVICE

An Apple a Day

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How Do You Like Those Apples?

Americans have enjoyed apples since colonists began growing trees in Jamestown, Virginia. United States' consumers eat more than 50 pounds of apples per year. About one-third of consumption is fresh fruit, while the other two-thirds are sauces, juices, and pies. Apples are commercially grown in every state generating approximately 2.7 billion dollars annually. Although 7,500 varieties are grown throughout the world, 2,500 of these are grown in the United States, with about 100 commercially grown.

West Virginia has substantial historic ties to apple production. Believe it or not, the legendary "Johnny Appleseed" was a real person named John Chapman who established several nurseries in West Virginia along the Ohio River. The Grimes Golden apple variety was discovered in Wellsburg by Thomas Grimes in 1805. After the Civil War, orchard production moved to the Eastern Panhandle. Maximum state production rose to 12 million bushels in 1931. Now, West Virginia averages 2.3 million bushels per year, ranking eleventh in the United States.

The second commercial apple variety discovered in West Virginia was the Golden Delicious. Thought to have originated from a Grimes Golden tree, the original Golden Delicious tree grew from a chance seedling. Anderson Mullins discovered the tree on the family farm in Clay County. Stark Brothers nursery bought the rights to the tree, and now the Golden Delicious is marketed worldwide. Offspring of the original tree are planted on every continent. More than 50 different varieties

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trace their ancestry to the Golden Delicious. Clay County has been home to the Golden Delicious Festival for 41 years. Since 1995, the Golden Delicious has been honored as the official state fruit of West Virginia.

Nutritional Value of an Apple

There is some truth behind the saying, "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" due to the nutritional value of the apple. A medium-sized apple with the skin is packed with nutrients. It provides nearly 20% of the daily requirement for fiber and has no saturated fats or cholesterol. It is also an excellent source of antioxidants, which are the nutrients and enzymes in our bodies that help prevent the development of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and cancer. An apple has 14% of the daily requirement for vitamin C and also smaller amounts (2%) of vitamin A, calcium, and iron. Apples are also low in calories with a medium-sized apple only having around 60 calories.

To keep apples fresh longer, it is important to refrigerate instead of keeping them at room temperature. Remember, do not rinse apples until ready to use. Mix one part lemon juice and three parts water to prevent apple slices from browning.

Apple Sayings

The American language has a collection of expressions that refers to apples.

- "An apple a day will keep the doctor away" – this expression is derived from the old English saying, "Ate an apfel avore gwain to bed, make the doctor beg his bread."
- "American as apple pie" – pies, pie-making skills, and apple seeds came over with the Pilgrims and other early settlers. In the early 1900s, apple pie came to represent prosperity in America. This prompted one newspaper to declare in 1902, "No pie-eating people can be permanently vanquished," thus prompting the creation of this expression.
- "The Big Apple" – this name is associated with New York City and hails from the 1930s and 1940s era when jazz was popular. Manhattan was associated with having "lots of apples on the tree" – in other words, lots of places to play jazz.

Planting Apple Trees

Carefully, select a planting site. Avoid low lying, poorly drained areas and frost pockets. Choose a higher, sloped area where cold air can circulate freely. Take a soil test prior to planting. After receiving results, add amendments 12 to 18 inches below the surface. Buy a one-year-old nursery tree about 4 to 6 feet tall. If the roots are dried out, soak in water for 24 hours. Dig a hole twice the diameter of the roots and 2 feet deep. Cover the roots and firm up soil to remove air pockets. Do not add fertilizer at this time, as roots can be burned. Ensure the graft union is 2 inches above soil. Water generously to get rid of air pockets. Plant two or more varieties for successful pollination.

Apple recipes found at *http://www.fh.ext.wvu.edu/publications/ceos-lessons*.

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