

Growing apples for Cider

Nick Gunn, Wandering Aengus Ciderworks
Salem, Oregon

Key Considerations

- For your own use or others?
 - Sold as juice or fruit?
 - Target market – Dry, Austere, English style? Funky French? N. American Heirloom?
 - Price point and format – What is the shelf price of the finished product?
- Cull fruit from a “packing operation” or orchard run?
- Marketplace growth potential – locally and regionally
- Shelf life

Key Considerations

- Labor Availability – Crucially important for organic
- Bloom/Harvest Timing
- Bin logistics
- Cold storage
- Marketing : Terroir? Tourist routes. NWCA (Northwest Cider Association). USACM (United State Association of Cider Makers).
- Is there a difference in the difference?

Varieties that work in the Willamette Valley

Bittersweets

Yarlington Mill

It is a vigorous tree that produces high yields of small yellow/red apples, the tree flowers early to mid season and it fruits mid season. Yarlington Mill is sweet to bittersweet English cider apple. Firm, medium size apples hang on tree well. Late season blending apple. Bears consistently. Medium bitterness. Low Acidity.



Dabinett

A classic English hard cider apple variety. It is one of the most reliable and easy cider varieties to grow.

Unlike many hard cider varieties which are best-used for blended ciders, Dabinett can also be used to produce a single-varietal full-bodied medium-dry cider. High astringency, medium bitterness, low acidity.



Chisel Jersey

The juice is bittersweet and very astringent. Ripens in late Fall. Chisel Jersey is one of the most famous of the Somerset bittersweets. The fruit is round-conic and red-striped with a brownish-pink blush. It has good sugar content and slow to medium fermentation, with medium acidity, very astringent, harsh and high in tannins



Sharps

Golden Russet

The "champagne" of old-time cider apples, also delicious for eating and drying. Grey-green to golden bronze with a coppery orange cheek; heavily splotched with light brown russet. Crisp, highly flavored, fine-textured, yellow flesh makes very sugary juice. They are high in both sugar, acid and tannins, which make them a good pair with almost any apple for eating, cooking or cider



Wickson Crab

Wickson apple is a perfect cider apple: spicy, with extraordinary sweetness and a pronounced acid tang. Size is that of a large crab apple. Reputed to make wonderful champagne cider and excellent fresh off the tree. Wickson is one of our favorite eating apples every fall. Fruit hangs well in garlands.



Newtown Pippin

The Newtown Pippin apple, native to what is now the borough of Queens in the City of New York, is a late-harvested, medium-large, flattish round, green-skinned, yellow-tinged, slightly russeted apple with a remarkably balanced tart/sweet flavor and an aroma described as “piney” by some. It is noted for the quality of the fresh and fermented cider it yields, its superior baking qualities, its excellence as out-of-hand eating apple, and its ability to mellow and improve in flavor with storage



Aromatics

Macintosh, Empire, Macoun, Jonamac

Used to build aromatic “appley” profile in ciders. Medium acid with high sugars.



Market Pricing

Bittersweets : \$.30/lb to \$1.00/lb Average \$.40/lb

Heirloom sharps: \$.15/lb to \$1.00/lb Average \$.30/lb

Wickson and other Crabapples: \$.30 to \$1.50/lb Average \$.50/lb

Cider Apple Demand

- Industrial cider: derived from concentrate, dried apple chips. All eating apples sourced from Wherever cheapest. Heavily processed. Low shelf price. Six packs. Medium growth potential. Very large entry point.
- Craft North American Cider: Derived from fresh juice with limited or no use of concentrates. Locally or regionally sourced Eating Apples. Cull fruit from packing houses. High growth potential. Medium entry point
- Artisanal orchard based cider: Derived from fresh juice from unique cider varieties. Sourced from estate or a couple orchards. Usually orchard run fruit. High growth potential. Small entry point.

Resources

Books

- The New Cidermaker's Handbook by Claude Jolicoeur
- Apples of Uncommon Character by Rowan Jacobsen
- Cider, Hard and Sweet by Ben Watson

Research

- WSU Extension – Mt. Vernon
- Long Ashton Research Station – England (Now shut down but great historical info)

Coursework

- Northwest Agricultural Business Center – Peter Mitchell
- Oregon State University – Cider Entrepreneurship Course

Join.....

The Northwest Cider Association

Come to.....

CiderCon

Questions?

