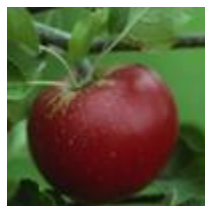


Massachusetts Apple Varieties

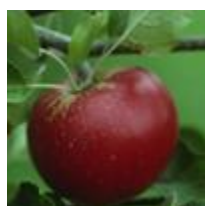
Apple descriptions taken from Apples by Roger Yepsen (c.1994, W.W. Norton & Company)



Akane

Akane is a cross between the well-known Jonathon and the obscure Worcester Pearmin. Akane comes highly recommended as a dessert apple, with an invigorating, tart taste and a marked aroma. Beneath its thin skin, the bright white flesh is juicy and crisp.

If you leave the peels on, Akane will make a pinkish sauce with a very good flavor; strain the sauce after cooking. Pie slices keep their shape. The apples can be dried successfully. Akane will not keep its quality for long in storage.



Baldwin

Baldwin began as a seedling in the northeastern Massachusetts town of Wilmington, sometime before 1750. The apple was named for a Colonel Baldwin, who grafted trees from the original seedling. The site of the forest tree is marked with a monument topped by an apple.

The thick, tearing, skin is on the juicy side. Baldwin's yellow flesh is crisp, coarse and juicy, with a spicy character that recommends it as a cider apple and for pies. These apples keep extremely well in storage.



Braeburn

Braeburn is a chance seedling from New Zealand's South Island, introduced in 1952. Uncut, Braeburn may have a faintly cidery perfume. The skin is thin and seems to disappear in the mouth. The flesh is yellow-green to creamy yellow, breaking and crisp in texture. Braeburn offers a complex, sweet tart flavor, with a noticeably aromatic aftertaste.

When cooked, Braeburn turns simpler but doesn't go flat. As sauce it needs little or nothing in the way of added sweetening. Braeburn also keeps well in storage.



Cortland

Cortland is a child of McIntosh and Ben Davis. It was an early success of the New York Experiment Station, which made the cross in 1998.

Cortland is larger than McIntosh. The thin tearing skin reveals crisp paper white flesh. The flavor is tart and tangy, but not emphatically so, and juicy to the point of messiness. In short, Cortland comes across as friendly; it's not a complex variety that will flood your sense gates, but it makes a good apple to accompany your sandwich. Or try it in pies and sauces. Cortland is suited for fruit salads because slices are usually slow to brown, although all-Cortland cider is apt to look watery.



Empire

This cross between the best-selling red varieties Red Delicious and McIntosh was introduced in 1966. Empire has proved superior to the parent it most resembles, Mac, in redness, flavor and post-harvest life. Not surprisingly, Empire has caught on with both the growers and the apple-eating public.

The creamy white flesh is crisp and juicy. Right off the tree, Empire is an excellent choice for eating out of hand if you like a loud, snapping apple that's sweeter than it is tart. Empires are frequently added to cider blends and can be used for cooking. In storage these apples keep their quality well.



Fuji

Fuji was developed from American parents, Ralls Janet and Red Delicious. Not a particularly gorgeous variety, it signals the reemergence of taste and texture as the main reasons for growing an apple.

The cream-colored, firm, fine-grained flesh seems something special from the first bite, as it fills the mouth with sweetness and juice. In taste tests Fuji consistently scores at or near the top, and among late-maturing varieties it is a standout.

Fuji is regarded as the best keeper of any sweet variety, and the apples retain their toothsome firmness for up to a year in refrigeration.



Gala

Gala is a strikingly attractive apple. The bright yellow skin is finely stippled with red, as if airbrushed, and the result is a near - neon intensity. Gala was developed in New Zealand by J.H. Kidd, crossing Golden Delicious and his own Kidd's Orange Red.

The pale, creamy flesh is crisp and dense, with a mild, sweet flavor and good aroma. The fruit is not large, but medium in size. In taste tests, Gala easily outscores McIntosh and is considered more sprightly than Golden Delicious. When cooked, Gala strikes some people as bland, but it can be dried with good results. Gala is also used in many cider blends. This apple stores well when refrigerated.



Ginger Gold

A chance of nature, Ginger Gold seems to be a cross between Golden Delicious and Pippin. This apple has a spicy sweet flavor with a firm white texture. Ginger Gold's are an excellent dessert apple and are too precious a commodity to use for cooking. Ginger Gold stores well when refrigerated.



Golden Delicious

Golden Delicious began as a chance seedling, perhaps of Grimes Golden, on a farmer's hillside near Bomont, West Virginia. Golden Delicious is not related to the red variety of that name.

This is a very easy apple to like. The skin is thin; the flesh, firm and crisp and juicy. Flavor and aroma are unmistakable, without being particularly assertive. Even the shape is somewhat agreeable: large, tall and conical. Golden Delicious strikes some cooks as too timid for the kitchen, but it can be used for pies and sauce with little or no sugar. Its distinctive aroma carries over into cider. Golden Delicious should store well if refrigerated but the skin will shrivel if kept at room temperature.



Golden Russet

Golden Russet is an early American apple, believed to have sprouted from a seed of an English Russet, It was a commercially marketed variety by the early 1800's and won a following.

The yellow flesh is crisp, fine-textured, and brightly flavorful, with a noticeable sweetness that made it a traditional favorite for hard cider. The apples can be used for cooking and drying. As with most russets, the apples keep well, but they need humid storage if they aren't to get soft under the skin.



Honeycrisp

Released by the University of Minnesota, this Honeygold and Macoun cross is a real crowd pleaser. The fruit is large and the skin is 50-90% red over a golden yellow background. The flesh is cream colored and exceptionally crisp and juicy with sub-acid flavor. This should be savored as a dessert apple but can also be used in sauces.



Idared

This cross of Jonathon and Wagener was introduced in 1942. Despite its origins in Idaho, Idareds are planted mostly in the East and the Midwest.

Uncut, Idared breathes as a sweet perfume. The crisp pale yellow-green flesh is juicy, fine-grained, tender, a bit tart and aromatic, with a taste something like Jonathon. Compared with other late-maturing varieties, Idared has not scored on top as a dessert apple. But it keeps its shape and flavor particularly well in pies, cooks down into a nicely colored sauce (leave the peels on and strain), and is often used in apple butter.



Jonagold

The cross of Jonathon and Golden Delicious was released in 1968 and since then has become extremely popular across Europe.

With its aroma of Golden Delicious and the sprightliness of Jonathon, Jonagold is an excellent sweet-tart dessert apple. The texture of the creamy yellow flesh is noticeably crisp and juicy. In a poll of nineteen apple experts in nine countries, Jonagold scored as the overall favorite. The fruit makes fair sauce and a good pie. If picked on time, Jonagolds store fairly well.



Macoun

Macoun has fans who hunt roadside stands watch fall for a bushel or two. It is a prodigy of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station and was introduced in 1923. The apple has some resemblance, in taste and appearance to its parent McIntosh (bred with Jersey Black) but with a darker red over the underlying green and a flavor that many prefer to Mac. The white flesh is firm, aromatic, and juicy. This is a good pie apple.



McIntosh

This was introduced in 1870 and went on to much fame and crossbreeding. McIntosh is the best-selling apple in the northeastern United States and in Canada.

The apple has white, tender, crisp flesh that's spicy, highly aromatic and full of juice. The characteristic flavor carries over into sauce, but in a pie the slices lose their shape. Macs are the principal cider apple in the Northeast. Beware of McIntosh as winter wears on; if not stored well, the apples may turn mealy.



Mutsu

Mutsu is a cross between Golden Delicious and Indo. It was developed in Japan in the 1930's and arrived in the United States in the late 1940's. The crisp, white flesh is juicy and has a touch of tartness, for an excellent dessert apple. In taste tests of Golden Delicious and apples descended from it, Mutsu scores on top. It does not make a particularly diverting pie. Sauce will have more flavor if you leave the peels on while cooking and then separate them with a strainer or colander. Mutsu is a worthwhile cider apple.



Paulared

A red fall apple that matures in summer, Paulared has a beautiful solid red blush color far ahead of other apples. The flavor is tart with light to creamy flesh that is as good for cooking as it is for eating. Paulareds will store well when refrigerated.



Red Delicious

Red Delicious is a marketer's ideal: as intensely red as the apple in Sleeping Beauty, instantly recognizable, tall and wasp-waisted, gorgeous and big! Riding on these qualities, the variety has pushed regional favorites aside. The skin is thick and bitter and has to be chewed vigorously. At its best the yellow flesh can be juicy and somewhat tart, and highly aromatic. This apple does not hold up well when cooked.



Redfree

Unlike other early varieties, Redfree is a sweeter tasting apple that stores extremely well. The red and green skin is thick and the flesh is white, crisp and juicy. Redfree is an excellent dessert apple and although it can be used in pies and sauces, it should be savored as one of the best tasting early varieties. Growers like Redfree for their genetic resistance to apple scab, making them a low-spray apple.



Roxbury Russet

Roxbury Russet may be America's first pomological achievement, having been developed and named in Roxbury, MA in the early 1600's. A look at one suggests how the idea of a good apple has changed over the centuries, Roxbury presents a dull green, heavily marked face to the world. But the crisp, tart apple has more personality than some of today's supermarket standards. Its yellow-green flesh is firm and coarse textured. Roxbury is suited to eating fresh and cooking and long has had a reputation as a fine cider apple. As with most older varieties, it keeps well for months.



Shamrock

Shamrock is the East-Coast's version of the Granny Smith. This is an extremely tart, green apple that is crisp and juicy. When at its peak, Shamrock develops an attractive red blush. If you like tart apples this is the one for you, otherwise Shamrock can be combined with other apples to make tasty pies and sauce.



Spartan

Spartan is one of the McIntosh clan, being a cross between that parent and Newton Pippin. The ribbed, dark, good-looking fruit buffs nicely. Uncut, it may have a sweet, candy like aroma. The flesh is firm, crisp, snow white and notably brisk in flavor and aroma. The flavor does not hold up well when cooked and has to lean on a lemon or two. Grower's like Spartan for its disease resistance and the variety is gaining in popularity.



Spencer

Spencer is a McIntosh and Red Delicious cross. McIntosh contributed its crisp and juiciness and combines with Delicious to give Spencer its unique sweet-tart flavor. Enjoy this apple in the fall because it loses many of its characteristics in storage. Although this should be enjoyed as an eating apple, Spencer can be used in pies and sauce.



Spigold

This large apple might also have been named Synergy for the way it borrows from and improves upon its genetic donors, Northern Spy and Golden Delicious. Within a relatively short period of time Spigold has won a large following. It offers an excellent combination of Spy's crisp, sprightly flesh and the slightly herbal aromatic sweetness of its golden-hued parent. The result is a complex flavor that makes this apple stand out even in taste tests of a hundred varieties Spigold keeps up to three months when refrigerated.



Winter Banana

Is the beautiful lemon yellow, waxy skin responsible for the name? Or does the apple really taste like a banana, as some commentators insist?

The skin is highlights with anything from a pale pink blush to an intense rouge that looks as though it had been spray painted. The apples often peppered with flecks of near black and bright carmine. A further distinguishing mark may be suture line. The uncut fruit has a faint, flowery perfume. Inside, the firm flesh is mild a, crisp and juicy. Winter Banana becomes rather unexciting when cooked but it makes a good cider apple.