

ORCHARD LINK NEWS

A Bargain Service on Tap?

Last month I could stand the leaking tap in my kitchen no longer. I called a plumber only to be told that it would cost me £25 to call him out before he did any work on the tap at all.

The conversation made me think of our co-ordinator Andrew Carden who daily receives calls from orchard owners in some of the remotest parts of the district. Before he can say 'yes' to collecting their fruit he pays a visit, sometimes travelling a 30 mile round trip, spends time assessing the orchard for collection, for access for the haulier's lorry, then spends time getting the best price for the fruit from local cider makers. Later he will deliver bags for collection or arrange pickers when an owner can't pick their own crop and follows all of this up with phone calls and writing and compiling the newsletter. All of this for the yearly subscription price of £15 seems a bargain to me. What a shame Orchard Link can't just call round and mend my tap!

PS If you've had trouble contacting or making a meeting with Andrew during the past couple of months – please bear with him. This autumn he's been inundated with enquiries and is only employed on a part time basis. If you are able please call with your enquiries when the linkline is open – Thursday 4pm-9pm and Saturday 9am-1pm and he'll be able to deal with you in person.

Trudy Turrell
Coast and Countryside Service

CROP CO-ORDINATOR'S DIARY

An apple a day keeps the doctor away!

However...when considering healthy sustainable growth for Orchard Link:- a tonne of apples a day (approximately 45 bags) is a more realistic quantity. Yes, that is the minimum amount of fruit which we need to harvest every day to keep up with demand!

In the first week of October more than 14 tonnes of culinary, dessert and cider apple were harvested, bagged and delivered to local food and drink manufacturers. Throughout October and early November, Orchard Link is looking to satisfy demand of an additional 120 tonnes of apples. Most, I'm pleased to say goes to cider, juice and preserve makers in South Devon – all small to medium local producers who have a reputation for quality local products. Your apples are at this moment being turned into cider, bramley juice, apple pies and apple jelly which you should see in your local shops soon (although some goes up to London to be sold in specialist shops at more 'specialist prices' than we pay!).

Since our launch in August, Orchard Link has been a whirlwind of activity. If I'm not out assessing orchards, arranging for pickers and hauliers or talking to cidemakers – then I'm in dealing with all your



enquiries on the Linkline (and they said this was only a part-time post!). Please bear with me if I take a little while to respond to your requests – both Orchard Link and I have not been given the luxury of a spring start – when I would have had time to 'cut my teeth' on just assessment visits and calls, prior to the onslaught of the harvest period!

Despite seeing hundreds, sometimes thousands of apples a day, I'm still amazed at the diversity of different varieties we have here in Devon – it's such a loss to our diet and out culture that all most of us are offered are 3 or 4 (most not even English) varieties on greengrocers or supermarket shelves. I mention in particular Pig's Nose (II). The delicate taste and succulent texture of this, an oddly shaped apple, serves as reason enough to develop local markets for locally derived fruit. Regrettably, Pig's Nose (I and II) currently appear to have limited distribution throughout the Devon region.

Living in Devon, I think we all have a duty to record, conserve and perpetuate this fabulous diversity of varieties for future generations to enjoy.

Andrew Carden.

INSIDE...

- Claim your special discounts on local food and drink!
- Plan ahead and choose the right apple variety for you
- Learn a host of countryside skills
- Join in and celebrate Apple Day – all over Devon

Buy Locally Act Globally

Researcher Andy Jones recently contacted me as he was interested in schemes to reduce the transport of local food between producer, manufacturer and consumer. One of Orchard Link's main aims is to keep the transport of apples to a minimum and to turn local apples into local cider, juice and preserves – so I was interested to read his findings on national figures for the transport of fruit.

In 1993, 417,207 tonnes of dessert apples were imported into Britain – in the process consuming 14 million litres of fuel, and producing-

47,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide

1500 tonnes of nitrogen oxides

155,000 kg of carbon monoxide

328,000 kg of hydrocarbons

plus 280,000 kg of particulate matters.

By supporting and selling your own apples through Orchard Link – you are helping to reduce pollution and the greenhouse effect. Who said that local schemes don't have a far reaching effect?



An Apple a Day

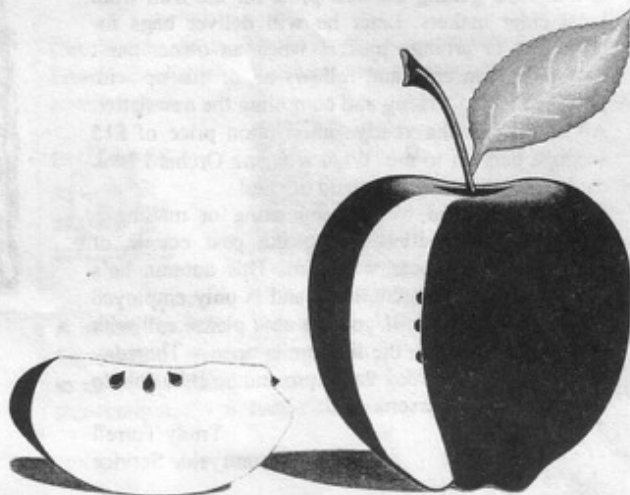
Here in England the climate is ideal for growing apples, with the cool temperatures and high rainfall which produces juicy, crisp apples of many varieties. Imported apples may take up to seven days to reach the consumer, but English apples are fresh and ready to eat immediately, usually reaching the supermarket shelf within 48 hours of leaving the grower.

Although you may not see traditional local varieties in your local greengrocers or supermarket, look out for Cox's Orange Pippins, Spartans, Egremont Russets and Worcester Pearmain. Cox's Orange Pippins are the favourite eating variety, and have a slightly sharp yet sweet flavour, and nutty-cream, honeyed flesh which is crisp and refreshing. They are usually available from mid-September to March, and have the orange-red and golden skins which give them their name. Spartans have a shorter season, from late September until early December, and have smooth red skins and crisp, aromatic, white flesh. Egremont Russets are golden, with slightly rough skins and crisp, sweet flesh, and are at their best throughout September and October. Worcester Pearmain have a shorter season, and are available for about four weeks in September. They have yellowish-green skins heavily flushed with red, and a crisp, sweet flesh.

Eating plenty of apples is very good for you, with the anti-oxidant properties of the vitamin C content helping to combat colds, headaches and respiratory infections. The pectins in apples also help to prevent the build-up of cholesterol in the blood vessels. Since over half of the vitamin C content is in the skin, it is always better to wash and eat it, rather than peel it.

The high fibre content is also good for the digestive system, and a medium-sized apple contains only about 80 calories. Together with the natural sugars which are metabolised slowly, helping to control blood-sugar levels, apples are ideal as part of a calorie-controlled diet, helping you to avoid munching on high-fat snacks between meals. At 95% water, a fresh, raw apple is satisfying without being fattening.

Dessert apples can be used for cooking, especially if you want apples which hold their shape, for example on top of a flan or open tart. If you like your cooked apples soft and fluffy, then choose a cooking variety such as the slightly sharp, distinctively-flavoured Bramley. Nothing is better for apple sauce than a Bramley, of course.



Sobering Thoughts

Common Ground – the national organisation who established Apple Day revealed that between April and the end of June a further 310 hectares of apple and pear orchards have been grubbed up under an EC scheme. Many more applications to grub up orchards will have been made than can be accommodated.

Contact this with the fact that Britain is only 35% self-sufficient in apples and is the second largest importer in the world.

Although we do import apples out of season from New Zealand and South Africa, we also import varieties such as Golden Delicious and Royal Gala from Europe during our own growing season.

If Orchard Link can at least tackle the issue of importing cider apples and pulp to make cider and other apple products locally – then were offering a local solution.

Orchard Help in Teignbridge

If you live in Teignbridge did you know that you may be eligible for some free apple trees if you are intending to restore an old orchard?

This winter Teignbridge Countryside Service are offering up to 6 apple trees of local varieties to farmers and landowners who are restoring old orchards. There are a limited supply of trees and priority will be given to orchards accessible or visible to the general public. The Service also offers help establishing new school and community orchards in the district. Tel. 01626 361101 and ask for ext. 2753 Mary DeLemos for details.

Good News for Dartmoor Dwellers

If you live in the National Park and are considering restoring or planting a traditional orchard, the National Park Authority may be able to help. They have a limited number of small grants towards the costs of apple trees. Call Brian Beasley on 01626 832093 for further details.



Cider or Compost?

If you end up with a glut of apples that were beyond help, why not compost them?

A compost bin will, when mixed with other waste, turn them into compost to use under those same apple trees the following year or in a wormery, worms will turn your apples into a wonderful liquid feed, which although foul smelling, works wonders on all your plants.

South Hams District Council are offering reduced priced compost bins and wormeries to enable people to compost at home.

The prices are:

Compost bins (RRP £29.99) £13.00

Wormeries (RRP £49.99) £29.00

They can be collected from Follaton House in Totnes any Tuesday between 10 and 12am or by special arrangement at other times – please contact the Recycling Helpline (01803 861199) for further details.

A Cut Above

This winter the Coast and Countryside Service are offering you the chance to learn to prune large mature apples trees. On their four special day courses you will learn the theory and then practice your skills – up a ladder tackling some large old apple trees for yourself.

In a small group with expert guidance from Tom Hoblyn (who sometimes writes our Orchard Advice section) you should gain all the skills and confidence you need to tackle your own trees.

Courses run from 10.30am to 4.00pm and cost £14 each. You'll need to book in advance from the Coast and Countryside Service. Contact them at Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes TQ9 5NE Tel: 01803 861140 and ask to be sent an events programme giving full details of these and their new series of countryside skills courses.

Choose from:-

Saturday 12th December - at College Way Orchard, Dartmouth

Saturday 16th January 1999 - at Berry Farm, Berry Pomeroy

Saturday 6th February - at Dartington

Saturday 6th March - at Dartington Primary School.

Razor Sharp

Learn the finer art of grafting and you'll be able to propagate not only your own varieties of apple trees but plums, medlars, cherries and quinces. On Saturday 20th February at Staverton you can learn from an expert grafter – Kevin Croucher of Thornhayes Nursery. The course runs from 10.30am to 1.00pm and costs £14 – the price includes a rootstock (worth £1) and a grafting knife (worth £7) – what a bargain! Places are limited though – contact the Coast and Countryside Service for booking.

Countryside Skills Courses

As well as dealing with orchard enquiries we get asked a variety of land management questions such as – How do I plant a new hedgerow? Should I also plant trees on my land? How do I dig a pond and where is it best to site it?

If you're one of those people who have an area of land but would like more background knowledge and skills to care for and manage it, a new series of courses is being organised this autumn and winter by the Coast and Countryside Service. They all last a day and offer a packed programme of 'lectures', discussions, and hands on skills. Some offer trips out to see others land and how they manage it and all are led by conservation experts. Full details are in their events programme (see address above). Meanwhile here's some dates for your diary:-

Sunday 1st November

Hedges and Boundaries

Saturday 14th November

Ponds, Streams and Marshland

Saturday 28th November

Trees: Planning and Planting

Saturday 23rd January 1999

Managing Your Woods and Trees

Which apple tree shall I plant?



I can just imagine this scene repeated countless times up and down the country:- a couple want to plant an apple tree in their garden. The man says to his wife, "What variety shall we plant?" Wife replies "Ooh, Coxes are nice dear." So, off they traipse to the garden centre (which probably only stocks about six varieties) and come home with their beloved Cox.

Now Cox's Orange Pippin does taste very good, but what many people do not realise is that it is very susceptible to scab, very susceptible to mildew, and very susceptible to canker. In other words it is most unlikely to grow ell in your garden unless constantly sprayed with various chemicals, which to my mind rather defeats the object of growing apples at home. This problem is further exacerbated by the damp Devon climate. Scab and canker are both much worse in warm moist weather. Resistance to these diseases is one of the reasons that many local apple varieties have come into being over the years.

I find it very irresponsible of garden centres (not all I hasten to add) to sell varieties so badly suited to local conditions, and to give such little information about which varieties to grow. This only serves to give apple growing a bad name. If gardeners grow unproductive trees with diseased apples on them, they are unlikely to give it a second try.

This does not mean that nationally known varieties should be forgotten; some of them grow very well here. Suntan is a good substitute for Cox's and Bramley and Newton Wonder both enjoy Devon weather. Even foreign apples can thrive here, Reinette du Canada, for example.

This apple illustrates well the next question you must ask - what do you wish to use the apple for? Reinette du Canada is a dual purpose apple, used for cooking (particularly French style tarts) early in the season, which becomes sweeter with age. So you could choose a dual purpose apple, usually on the sharp side for dessert use, a cooker, an eater, or of course a cider apple.

Other questions you must think about are the size of tree you want (determined by the rootstock), whether the blossom is likely to be affected by late frosts, and whether you have a suitable mix of trees to ensure pollination. Space prohibits a full discussion of these topics now, but I hope to cover them in a future article. In the meantime a few local varieties to whet your appetite: Devonshire Quarrenden (dessert), Devonshire Crimson Queen (dessert), Manaccan Primrose (cooker/dessert), Pig's Nose (dessert), Town Farm No.59, also known as Netherton Late Blower (cider), Slackmagridle (cider). The list could go on for a long time! Happy planting.

Ben Pike
(South Hams Orchard Services)

The Great Apple Hunt is On!

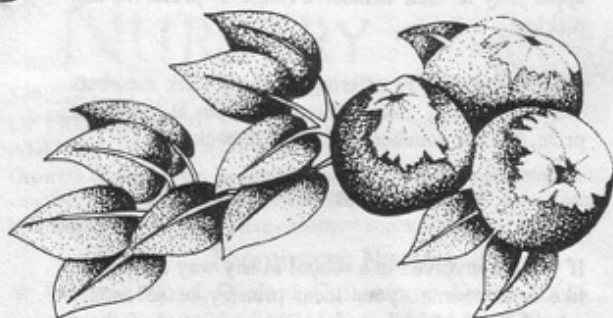
Dartington North Devon Trust runs the "Save Our Orchards" Campaign in North Devon, and has produced *Devon Apples* - a list (and information) relating to apples with close associations with the county. A new edition will be available for Apple Day 1998. The Trust is trying to chase a number of missing varieties. If you know of the following trees please contact Michael Gee at DNDT tel. 01271-376365.

At July 1998 the following varieties had not been located (*) or photographed (+).

Baram Beauty* Beech Bearer* Beef Apple+ Bickington Gray* Billy White* Bodens Seedling* Broomhouse White* Butterbox* Buttery D'or+ Catshead+ Cerif* Coleman's Seedling+ Colloget Pippin (syn. Cornish Giant)+ Cornish Honey Pin+ Crediton Fair+ Crimson Victoria+ Devon Crimson Queen (syn. Queenie)+ Devonshire Buckland+ Dufflin+ Early Blenheim+ Early Bower+ Endsleigh Beauty+ Exeter Cross+ Fairfield+ Fair Maid of Devon+ Farmers Glory+ French Long Stem* Golden Ball* Golden Bittersweet+ Golden Wonder+ Goring+ Great Britain+ Green Bittersweet+ Gulval Seedling+ Halstow Natural+ Hewrefordshire Pippin+ Hockings Green+ Hollow Core+ Keswick Codling+ King Byerd+ King Manning* Langworthy (syn. Sour Natural)+ Lincoln Horn* Listener+ Long Bit* Lucombes Pine+ Major+ Meil D'Or+ No Pip+ Oaken Pin+ Payhembury+ Pear Pine* Pig's Nose+ Pig's Snout+ Pine Apple Russet+ Plymouth Cross+ Pound* Quarry Apple+ Queen's+ Rawlings* Red Jersey+ Red Robin+ Reine Des Pommes+ Reynold's Peach* Royal Somerset+ Saw Pit+ Sercombe's Natural+ Sops in Wine+ Spicy Pippin* Spotted Dick+ Stone Pippin* Stripey Sweet* Sugar Bush+ Sugar Loaf+ Sugar Sweet+ Sweet Bramley* Sweet Cluster* Tamar Beauty+ Tan Harvey+ Thin Skin* Town Farm 59+ Warners King+ Whimble Queen+ Whimble Wonder+ White Close Pippin+ White Sheep's Nose* Winter Stubbard+ Winter Queening+ Woolbrook Russet*

WHAT'S ON

Celebrate Apple Day all Over Devon!



Common Ground's invention of 'National Apple Day' (October 21st) is fast becoming a national institution – with hundreds of Apple Day celebrations springing up all over Britain. As Apple Day falls on a Wednesday this year, there are events on either weekend – from farm and nursery open days with stalls and tastings to massive events on the scale of a large country fair. For details of Apple Days nationwide write to Common Ground who supply a list at PO Box 25309 London NW5 12A. Enclosing an SAE.

If you're in South Devon, we hope you'll come and see us at Dartmouth Orchard Day (Sunday 25th) where Orchard Link will have a stand and be pressing apples on site so that you can drink the juice – as fresh as it comes. Here for your diary is a selection of events on offer:-

Sunday 18th October

Apple day at Rosemoor Gardens, Great Torrington, North Devon. A chance to see acres of RHS gardens with guided tours, planting demonstrations, fruit displays. Also apple cookery demonstrations, cider to taste, apple art to admire and family entertainment. You can also take up to 3 apples to have identified. Adults £4, children 6-16 £1. For details call 01805 624067.

Saturday 24th October

- Thornhayes Nursery, Collumpton (who have the most comprehensive selection of Westcountry apple trees you are likely to find) have an open day from 10am to 4pm with demonstrations, guided tours, apple tasting, childrens games and more. Find them off the A373 Honiton to Collumpton road. Phone 01884 266746 for further details.
- Come and celebrate Apple Day on Saturday 24th October in a traditional old orchard. Apple tasting, apple bobbing and many other 'apple' activities for all the family – it's all FREE! 11.00am to 1.00pm at Mincinglake Valley Park, Exeter (follow signs from Orchard Park off Colthorpe Road or take the 'F' bus from the city centre). Organised by Exeter Countryside Service, phone 01392 265890 for further details.

On Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th

- Eggesford Gardens, North Devon are holding a North Devon Apple and Cider Fair. Lots of stalls the Devon Pomona on display, apple pressing and competitions for apple pies, cider and the biggest apple. 11am – 5pm free admission. Contact Dartington North Devon Trust for details 01271 376365. Otterton Mill Garden Centre, Ottery St. Mary are also holding an Apple Day celebration weekend. Come and see cider pressing and taste apple dishes in the Duckery Restaurant 10am -5pm tel. 01395 568521 for details.

Sunday 25th October

Dartmouth Orchard Day offers a chance to explore College Way Orchard – 10 acres of restored beautiful hillside orchard with fabulous views of the Dart. Tales by Clive Fairweather, a musical journey through the story of cider, apple pressing, tours, apple basket demonstrations and the chance for you to make apple cards, brooches and orchard insects from junk! The Devon Orchard Project and Orchard Link will both have stalls. 10.30am to 4.00pm College Way Orchard is signed from College Way and Coronation Park, Dartmouth. Adults £2, children £1. For details call the Coast and Countryside Service 01803 861140.

Also Cockington Apple Day – an extravaganza of stalls and activities at Cockington Court, Torquay. Lots of cider to taste and good local food to buy and taste. For the children there's face painting, apple bobbing and lantern making, music and dancing all day and tours of the organic garden on site. 10am to 5pm. Adults £2, children 50p. For details call Torbay Countryside Service 01803 607230.

ORCHARD LINK DIARY

October 18-25th

Apple Days! See above for full details.

November 1st

Hedges and Boundaries – Course. Background knowledge and hands on tuition in hedgelaying. Contact no. 01803 861140. BOOKING ESSENTIAL.

November 14th

Ponds, Streams and Marshland – Course. Siting design, the legal and wildlife aspects and a practical visit. Call 01803 861140. BOOKING ESSENTIAL.

December 5th

Learn to Prune (mainly newly planted apple trees) – Eastington, near Lapford. Call Dartington North Devon Trust 01271 376365 for details.

December 12th

Learn to Prune. Tackle mature apple trees at this practical day course with Tom Hoblyn. For details call 01803 861140. BOOKING ESSENTIAL.

January 9th

Orchard Wassail in Stoke Gabriel. Orchard traditional fund with wassailing the trees, morris men, storytelling and lots more. Full details in Winter's Orchard Link News.



What to do with those apples

MICROWAVE APPLE SAUCE

Peel, core and chop an apple, and microwave for four to four and a half minutes on full power, or until soft.

MICROWAVE BAKED APPLE (FOR ONE)

Core a large apple, cut around the skin at the 'equator', fill with mincemeat and microwave on full power for 3 minutes.

CINNAMON APPLE TART

375 g. packet of puff pastry
45 ml. (3tbsp) ground almonds
3 red skinned eating apples
15 ml. (1tbsp) lemon juice
25 g. (1 oz.) butter
30 ml. (2tbsp.) demarara sugar#2.5 ml. (0.5 tbsp.) ground cinnamon
15 ml. (1 tbsp.) clear honey

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees C. (400 f., Gas Mark 6).

Roll the pastry into a 30cm. (12 in.) round, and trim with a sharp knife into an apple shape.

Place on a baking sheet, and prick with a fork all over, leaving 2 cm. (3/8 in.) unpricked all round the edge. Shape the pastry trimmings into leaves, and place at the top of the apple.

Sprinkle the pastry base with ground almonds.

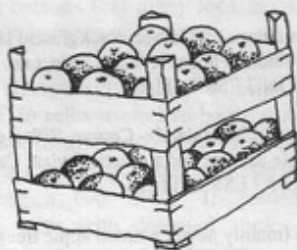
Core and thinly slice the apples, and toss in lemon juice. Arrange the slices on the pastry base to within 2 cm. of the edges.

Melt the butter and brush over the apples.

Sprinkle with demara sugar and ground cinnamon.

Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the pastry is golden and crisp.

Brush with honey, and serve hot or cold.



Link Apples Help Launch Land Girls

'Land Girls' the new and highly acclaimed film of the lives of three second world war land girls in the westcountry has recently been launched in Exeter and in London. At the premier guests tucked into traditional westcountry fare provided by Heather Tor – whose pickles and preserves are made with Orchard Link apples.

Congratulations Heather and Peter on getting such a prestigious contact. It's nice to think of the media cognicenti feasting on locally produced food that the original land girls would have harvested themselves.

Preserving the Harvest

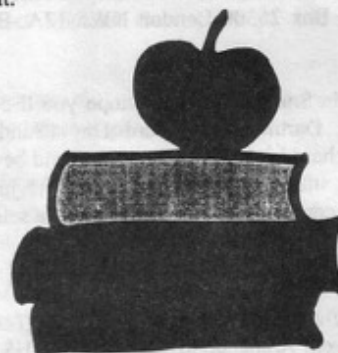
Just made and ready to go on sale this Autumn, Heather Tor have added crab apple jelly and mint and apple jelly to their extensive range of preserves and pickles.

This winter they're offering Orchard Link members the chance to try their home made foods at a reduced price. See the voucher on the inside back page!

An Apple for the Teacher?

If you are involved in a school in any way and would like to encourage your local primary or secondary school to plant and manage its own small orchard Learning Through Landscapes has just produced has just produced a stimulating school orchards pack.

With lesson ideas for suing the orchard right across the curriculum from literacy to maths, science to cookery, the pack deals with far more than how to plant and care for apple trees. This pack costs around £10, but Orchard Link has its own pack – available on loan free to Orchard Link members so call Andrew Carden on the Linkline if you'd like to borrow it.



Situations vacant

OCCASIONAL HELPERS to man stalls at local shows and fetes, help distribute leaflets and newsletters – or even answer the phone!

If you are interested in apples and orchards and would like to help Orchard Link we'd like to hear from you. There are many ways in which you can help Orchard Link grow and thrive. Help is only needed on an occasional basis and no specialist knowledge is required – although of course we'd welcome anyone with horticultural / advertising / display skills!

The work is unpaid – but we will supply you with tea / coffee / lunch, perhaps even free membership and a warm glow of satisfaction! Tel. 01548 511549.