



Apple Bigotry (or going soft on the topic of apple texture)

Posted by [Todd Parlo](#)

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[Todd Parlo](#)

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August 31, 2019 10:13PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 301

On a recent discussion on the Mantet apple the conversation got around to apple texture. I have been thinking a lot this season about preconceived notions we have on things. There is no argument that much of the criteria we have around food is culturally biased. In other parts of the world a gooey beetle is all the rage, people actually eat a "hundred" year old egg, and here in Walden, Vermont we toss away that last quarter bag of barbecue chips because they have lost their crunch.

This week I have been eating several varieties that will illustrate a commentary on fruit texture: Mantet, Irish Peach, Lowland Ras, Melba, and Vista Bella. These all have their distinctions, but all approach their flavorful best when they get dangerously close to disaster. The deathknell to apples...mealiness. But if we dare, and are patient the payoff is worth the risk. I wonder if we can distinguish the difference any more, between creamy or succulent and mealy. We all know Honeycrisp is finally to blame for the final nail in the coffin of public unrest with apple softness, but we have been breeding this trait out for a good long time. I get it, mush is mush, and a drippy experience is reserved for the noble peach. But what about that? Why do we love a gushing peach, or a creamy pear, but good god, not in an apple. In my opinion I think it is a learned response. Marketed even. It is also a shame, as many are missing out.

We might also talk about this experience as dependent on location. I mean location in terms of large commercial enterprise vs Susie's back yard. The gardeners among us will agree that the experience pulling a spear of asparagus or ear of corn right from the garden and into the pot is available nowhere but close to home. That flavor and quality will be gone a day hence. It is also true that these lowly summer apples hold another position inaccessible to the industrial food system. There is no way on god's green earth a supermarket purchase will provide the sourbet texture and berry flavors of an uber ripe Mantet. You will have to go back to the farm for this one. And I like it that way.

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[Leslie Price](#)

[Re: Apple Bigotry \(or going soft on the topic of apple texture\)](#)

April 25, 2020 10:51PM

Registered: 5 years ago

Posts: 20

I here you!!! I am a first generation apple farmer. I started growing apples in the early 1990's and everyone I knew told me I was insane but then, at the time, my wife and I still had our day jobs 😊 smiling smiley I like to think that because I didn't have the burden of preconceived farming notions placed on me by my parents or a packinghouse or marketing wing that I could start fresh and actually see with open eyes what was going on to the apple industry in the mid 1990's. By the time I started direct marketing my apples at farmers markets in the Seattle WA area in the late 1990's the apple industry in Washington State was in full collapse.

Now that ive bored you with all that ill get back to the subject. I was completely ignorant to what was going on around me as I entered the apple selling market. What immediately struck me though was that I couldn't sell an apple to hardly anyone. Especially if the apple was red. Especially if the apple looked anything like a Red Delicious. I quickly learned that I had to use fresh cut (on demand cutting, not a tray of browning, ugly samples) sampling technique with large, thick samples so the customer could get an idea of the texture as well as the flavor. I finally started asking all these kids who were refusing samples why it was they didn't like apples, I mean come on!!! The consistent answer was that they didn't like the mealy red apples they got on their lunch tray at school. So guess what folks, the powers to be, whoever you want to blame for it, have raised an entire generation of apple hating people by breeding then growing then hyping then selling the worst of the worst apples to the school lunch program. After 20 years of doing many farmers markets a week and successfully convincing people that there is life after mealy Red Delicious I have now settled into sustainable business of U pick. It was hard though, made even harder with the introduction of Honeycrisp. People have been burnt so bad for so long at the grocery that an apple like HC will at least give them crisp. Sure it has no flavor but at the end neither did Red Delicious. The really sad thing to see is the constant breeding going on with HC. Mostly trying to make it redder of course. Its like the disaster of the 1990's never happened. Get a clue people! Product identity is everything. Customers know what a HC looks like, if you make it redder you will loose the product identity as well as make it just one more red apple lost is a sea of red apples in the grocery as well as possibly breed out good qualities the variety originally had (ie red delicious).

It was hard to convince customers who are adamant to by HC to try an apple that you know is better, that is the problem of a fad like HC. It will pass, im sure. With the U pick on the other hand it is easy to convince them. We stopped growing HC except 1 tree. There are plenty of great varieties that actually have flavor, during the season of HC so once the customer samples these fresh off the tree.... of course they don't want a HC!

Its super easy to give the people what they want with a U pick. The challenge, of course is storage for the grocery store. This is where HC is always going to come through (providing its properly grown). The Cosmic Crisp has been super popular too. I think it will quickly replace HC as unlike HC the CC has unique flavor character. The Mac cross balances the sweetness just right.

Leslie Price

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