

## Arkansas Black

Posted by [Brittany Kordick](#)  
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[Brittany Kordick](#)  
[Arkansas Black](#)

Registered: 4 years ago  
 Posts: 209

April 08, 2022 07:04PM

Arkansas Black is one of our top performers and easiest keepers down South. In a holistically managed orchard, you can't beat it. Number one, its thick, waxy skin is relatively impervious to the fruit rots that plague most other varieties. Also, its dark color conceals any dry pest/disease damage (and makes for awesome fairytale black candied apples come Halloween) and makes for a stunning appearance. While far from the latest bloomer in our orchard, it does bloom relatively late and tends to miss late freezes. Best of all, it ripens later in the season, typically October (sadly, this is considered pretty late down South; August is our peak harvest month), and stores very well. Some folks won't touch it until Christmas, as flavor mellows in storage, but we enjoy it off the tree. I thought this was a good variety to add to the forum list, because I was recently surprised to learn that more and more orchardists are planting it north of the Mason-Dixon line. Obviously, lots of reasons it might appeal, but I'd be curious to know how the variety is performing in New England.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

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[Shane Patrick](#)

[Re: Arkansas Black](#)

Registered: 2 years ago  
 Posts: 22

April 11, 2022 01:20PM

We have a handful of Arkansas Blacks. I'll second everything Brittany wrote. Here in Midcoast Maine, it looks red, ripe and ready by mid-September but comes off the trees in the first week of November. That's a big plus in our opinion. This orchard has plenty of the Cortland/Mac/Empires that all demand attention in the same hectic week or two. Early and late varieties extend our farmer market season and can be picked by the two nutjobs who own the joint without outside help. We sampled Blacks from the apples we kept for ourselves, there's one left in the fridge and I bet it still has the satisfying crunch. They kept getting better until peaking in flavor the last week of February. The only caution that comes to mind is if you have a PYO operation, the Blacks need to be cordoned off from the others because they look irresistible long before they are enjoyable.

Shane Patrick

pleasant pond orchard

Richmond, Maine 5b

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[Prairie Sundance](#)

[Re: Arkansas Black](#)

Registered: 2 years ago  
 Posts: 47

April 13, 2022 04:09AM

Interesting, we went Black Oxford instead of Arkansas Black worried they wouldn't handle our zone favorably, (4b/5a), but it sounds like they ripen well for you in Maine. I wonder what the northern edge is for the Arkansan's? (Arkansasn's? Arkansawn's? You know what I mean..)

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[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: Arkansas Black](#)

Registered: 4 years ago  
 Posts: 209

September 25, 2023 08:54PM

I was just perusing the latest Fedco Trees catalog and happened to notice a new little blurb detailing their work with the apple geneticists at Washington State University "to confirm the identity of all the apple varieties we offer through Fedco and preserve at MOFGA in Unity." It mentions a recent discovery that their original Arkansas Black scionwood source was mistakenly known as such, and that the DNA testing showed that it was, in fact, a Blacktwig.

I know a lot of orchardists in New England have been planting and propagating Arkansas Black, so just wanted to add this to the thread about the variety in case anyone suspects they may have gotten Blacktwig instead. There are some similarities, in terms of thicker skin, later harvest, dark color, but if you've seen both of the apples and are certain of their identity, it would be hard to mistake a dark, dark full-on purple Arkansas Black for a dark mahogany red with green Blacktwig. Our Arkansas Blacks also are one of our later bloomers, definitely later than Blacktwig.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

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