



Cider apple quality

Posted by [Shelah Horvitz](#)

[Forum List](#) [Message List](#) [New Topic](#)

[Shelah Horvitz](#)

[Cider apple quality](#)

October 01, 2015 09:30PM

Registered: 8 years ago

Posts: 24

I have planted a number of cider apple varieties, and while I'm waiting for them to grow I am looking to get some practice with other people's apples. Our neighbor has an abandoned orchard, and on close inspection I think they have Adams Permian, Duchess of Oldenberg, Newtown Pippin, maybe Michelin, and some Antonovka. The thing is, since these trees have not been cared for, they're buggy. I recognize that scabby is not a problem, but you see curculio and codling moth damage in every apple. I would say, forget about using these for cider, but every photograph I've seen of apples ready to be pressed into cider shows apples that look just as buggy.

Should I say, thank you but no thank you, and look for cider apples whose only malady is scab, or should I say thank you and name the cider after them?

Shelah Horvitz

Weld, Maine

Zone 4b

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 10/03/2015 12:44AM by Shelah Horvitz.

[Reply Quote](#)

[Jeff Harner](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 02, 2015 11:33PM

Registered: 8 years ago

Posts: 6

I'm only making cider on a hobby scale at this point (usually about 50 gallons a season or so), but most of the apples I use have some kind of damage, particularly from curculio. Because I'm so small I can cut out any rotten parts, but for the most part I'm able to work around the damage.

Jeff Harner

Zone 7

Takoma Park, MD

[Reply Quote](#)

[Shelah Horvitz](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 03, 2015 12:47AM

Registered: 8 years ago

Posts: 24

Well that makes sense. I certainly am working with small enough quantities that I could cut out the damage.

I wonder, though, why when I see photos of cider apples, they always have spots all over them. Take, for example, the cover of Ciderland: [51ypIDbKEjL_SX435_BO1,204,203,200_.jpg](#)

Shelah Horvitz

Weld, Maine

Zone 4b

[Reply Quote](#)

[Claude Jolicoeur](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 08, 2015 01:58PM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 226

I don't worry about insect damage unless there is obvious rot. And if the apple is partly rotten, it is often more efficient to throw it out than to cut the rotten part... Rot is really the only problem you should worry about.

For my part, I more often get damage from apple maggot, but I don't suppose CM or curculios make much more damage.

[Jolicoeur Orchard](#)

Zone 4 in Quebec

Author, [The New Cider Maker's Handbook](#)

[Reply Quote](#)

[Shelah Horvitz](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 08, 2015 03:43PM

Registered: 8 years ago

Posts: 24

Thank you, that is excellent news! As my husband says, that is a game-changer! That means we can use everything we harvested.

We just won't tell anyone who's drinking the cider about the extra protein sources.

Shelah Horvitz

Weld, Maine

Zone 4b

[Reply Quote](#)

[Todd Parlo](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 14, 2015 02:22PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 301

We fully agree with Claude's assessment. Spotty fruit is usually frowned upon by agencies more than humans.. when it comes to pressing. In fermenting, disease organisms are not going to find purchase.

If there are cidermakers that are going to store fruit for an extended period, to spread the pressing window, any malady to the apple is going to spell trouble. Scab can even rot the apple in storage if it is bad enough. I find bruising is the number one culprit for this, not insects or pathogens.

Timely pressing would allow the ciderin' of the most ungainly fruit.

[Walden Heights Nursery & Orchard](#)

Zone 3 in Vermont

[Reply Quote](#)

[Shelah Horvitz](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 14, 2015 02:33PM

Registered: 8 years ago

Posts: 24

So this is interesting. Remember, this is my first batch of cider so all my knowledge is book learning. I have read that in order to concentrate the sugars, you should wait to press until the apples are softened enough that you can push in with your thumb and the indentation will stay. So I have been letting my apples sit.

The ones I picked aren't bruised — they're just full of insect scars and weirdly shaped. However, to round out the blend, I just picked up about a bushel of utility cortlands that I didn't pick and that are in bags. I would bet that these apples have bruises. So I should press them immediately? And maybe press the rest of the apples with them?

Shelah Horvitz

Weld, Maine

Zone 4b

[Reply Quote](#)

[Todd Parlo](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 14, 2015 09:20PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 301

The period of sitting is called "sweating" since it is offing moisture. Yes, this concentrates sugars, and everything else too in terms of flavors. Time can reduce acid due to some other processes, but this is likely a longer period than you are talking about.

Circulation is key, any stagnation can lead to deterioration. If your bags are cloth or paper, they may be fine. I use burlap sacks to hold my apples for fermentation. Plastic bags will spell trouble.

I wouldn't panic about any of it. Apples can keep in good shape despite my comments on rotting. Like many things you just need to keep an eye on them. You want to make a good brew, and any funky fruit will lead to weird flavors.

[Reply Quote](#)

[Nick Segner](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 18, 2015 02:20AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 49

I'd like to pipe in on this thread especially since Claude may see this and I always value Todd's opinions..

What's your collective take on E Coli risk with dropped (windfall picked every other day) fruit?

We sell cider fruit to a local hard cider maker in Port Townsend that doesn't use sulfites. They will only take tree picked fruit from us. Now that's fine but I'm a little more adventurous (and, Claude, you mention in your book Farnum Hill picks from the ground commercially, though I'd assume they use sulfites..)

We have approx 2500 lbs of dropped (over 250 varieties, many cider variety) fruit that we will be pressing for our own (well we have some friends that like to drink too) consumption. Now, we cull out the bird-pecked, mouse-chewed, slug-oozed, and rotten fruit, but we do have a pair of dogs and chicken who thinks she's a dog in the orchard lending some chance at E Coli contamination..

We sanitize the pressing and brewing equipment thoroughly, and often use the Lalvin EC-1118 that's supposed to afford up to 30 ppm "natural" sulfite to the must. We slow ferment in cool PNW temps in the garage and it takes a year to ferment out. No problems yet but just wondering what kind of potential risk we can expect.

Nick Segner

Wildcat Valley Farm
Zone 8b
Olympic Peninsula Rainshadow
Port Angeles, Washington

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Claude Jolicoeur](#)

[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 18, 2015 06:18AM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 226

Nick,
All that I have read about E Coli says it is destroyed by fermentation. Hence risk is considered nil for cider (hard obviously). For fresh juice, it is another story!

I don't think sulfite or no sulfite changes anything on this. However, if you do use drops for cider, there would be more rot and other decayed parts of apples that would increase the binding of sulfite - for a given amount of sulfite, more binding means less free (efficient) SO₂, hence the dosage would need to be increased to get the same protection.

You would certainly enjoy a trip to the old cider countries, France and UK, where they collect apples on the ground (sometimes really dirty and muddy), and ferment them often without any sulfite, albeit after washing and sorting out the worst ones. I was amazed to see almost none of the cideries I visited would pass any sort of sanitary inspection in North America. However the ciders are delicious and harmless...

Claude

[Jolicoeur Orchard](#)

Zone 4 in Quebec

Author, [The New Cider Maker's Handbook](#)

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Nick Segner](#)


[Re: Cider apple quality](#)

October 18, 2015 08:18AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 49

Claude -

Thanks for the quick reply!  smiling smiley

That's what I feared. Oh well, I'll have to find another way to kill off the friends who drink too much of my precious cider... (Hah!)

Seriously, though, most drops land in our thick hay mulch and we sort two times before pressing and also wash the apples briefly in water just prior to pressing. Didn't use sulfites last year (our first season on the orchard) and we must be doing something right- no spoiled batches out of 105 gallons.. Except the one that became "jet fuel" by letting a carboy ferment in the extremely variable temps of our passive solar home (perhaps reaching 85+ degrees) creating probable butanol/isobutanol! Most of the cider (made last year from a random assortment of 260 varieties) turned out quite well and some are really nice though we didn't pay any attention to acidity and so we turned some batches into vinegar.

This year we are paying a little more attention to blending. We have several dozen Boskoop trees and I'm excited to try your 30% Boskoop cider blend- we will have 8 or so batches going with the Boskoop blend .. some with Court Pendu Plat and Muscat de Bernay, and other bittersweets in there - can't wait!

..And, right, our sweet cider is made strictly with tree picked fruit.

Cheers and Happy Harvest all!

Nick Segner

Wildcat Valley Farm
Zone 8b
Olympic Peninsula Rainshadow
Port Angeles, Washington

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Newer Topic](#) [Older Topic](#)

[Print View RSS](#)

Sorry, only registered users may post in this forum.

[Click here to login](#)

This [forum](#) is powered by [Phorum](#).