



## Sharing your cider apple experience

Posted by [Todd Parlo](#)

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

[Todd Parlo](#)

[Sharing your cider apple experience](#)

March 13, 2023 03:42PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 301

Making a routine push here to get folks to share their successes and woes as regards the world of cider trees. Something with mind blowing flavor, a tree management champion, or an outright piece of crap? Your experience is important to the rest of us, and the reason we are all together in this space. On this note, in the up and coming Community Orchardist we have an article that discusses a recent cider apple study. This shares with you a great deal of data we collected in the last two years to help you make an informed decision. You can help by writing about your trees and apples, and by officially joining the network [[www.groworganicapples.com](http://www.groworganicapples.com)]

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

[Andy Brennan](#)

[Art of Growing Cider Apples](#)

March 13, 2023 06:15PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 10

Art can not be taught. At best, a teacher can help the student learn how THEY make art. Although it's possible to teach the formal aspects of art, one can not teach art-making itself because art is a relationship, not a product. The "product" manifests from the relationship. Always.

There is nothing elitist about this because everyone is an Artist. That's right, YOU are an Artist!

Do you have a relationship to your family and friends? Then you are an Artist. Do you have a relationship to Earth and the environment? Artist. Do you have a relationship to the Spirit within (your thoughts, your body, imagination, feelings and intuition?) Then YOU ARE AN ARTIST. You already have lots of practice with this and it will translate in your study apple trees and cider. Trust it.

So, to be clear, apple cultivation is a relationship. And so is cider making.

Remember this fact ALWAYS and meditate on your relationship as you digest what the "experts" say about the formal qualities (sometimes known as the "science") with heavy grains of salt.

Want little-old *me* to speak about the formal qualities of cider apples and cider making?

Fine, I can do that, maybe as well as anyone alive, but DON'T get lost in my words and knowledge.

They are just ideas, like all of Science is an idea. (Whoa, wait a minute! Do you disagree? Fine, come back to me in 300 years time and be astounded to learn everything that we "know as fact" today will be disproven -- and probably seem ridiculous.)

Rule number 1: Don't let ideas substitute for YOUR experience of life. You will figure it out. Trust it.

Rule number 2: Be weary of everyone who is not you! Don't trust their words. Inspect them.

When I say, "Dabinett is a good cider apple but it sucks in Northeast soils (unless you amend the soils, graft on dwarf, spray and irrigate, etc., in which case you're removing 90% of the good properties anyways.) What you *really* should grow is wild, assimilated trees because it's not the variety, it's how it's grown..." keep in mind this is just what *I* say (because it was true with *my* experience.) But I have a very different way of relating to the world than you. You TELL me how to grow a cider apple! Seriously. That's what it's all about.

Knowing this we can THEN proceed and relax as equals...

Go ahead and ask us about soils. Don't be shy. We're all trying to figure our relationships out and we're all here to support one another.

Let's talk about cider varieties. Let's talk about anything from root stocks, fermentations, to marketing. We at the Holistic Orchard Network have lots of experience to share. This group emerged (with Michael Phillip's help) as a world leader in alternative apple knowledge. We know some shit. But being an artist, just remember it's all relative. Only you can make it real.

Andy Brennan

10 miles north of where NY, NJ, and PA intersect in the Catskills/ Hudson Valley

Zone 4b, 5a, 5b, 6a and soon to be 6b

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

[Craig Bickle](#)

[Re: Art of Growing Cider Apples](#)

March 14, 2023 05:35PM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 82

Ain't it the truth, brothers and sisters (etc.)

Since I've embarked on this quest to make the best cider I can with apples available to me, including and especially the ones I grow, I've

been scratching my head and racking my brain. Why hasn't someone before me tried all of the varieties on offer and shared which ones will grow best and produce consistently quaffable drinks in my part of the world?

Ten years ago I'd probably have read Andy's encomium of the cider-maker as artist and been skeptical. This is biology, agriculture, chemistry... is it not? Well, as I've found out through patient experience, it is and it isn't.

My latest lesson came on opening a 14 month old bottle of single-variety Gala that six months previous had been fairly undrinkable and had since been happily crossed off my list of apples to ferment again, especially because it wasn't the easiest apple to press. But now, it was sublime. Complex in a way unmatched by any cider I'd ever had before.

Of course, it was also unbalanced and slightly rough. I'm sure it wouldn't have won an award for checking off the characteristics of a rightly done cider at the state fair. But does that matter when each sip of the glass before me confirms this a taste I certainly have never experienced before and probably few others have either? And when far from being an unpleasant taste, it's inviting and warm?

As I finished that glass of solo Gala, I recalled I had just recently ordered scions of half a dozen "cider apples" to graft onto 58 new rootstocks also on order, none of them this particular dessert variety. But no matter, I suppose, the trees I'm planting next week will have their own things to say about what tastes good or nasty on any given day or year, and they won't tell me their secrets for almost another whole decade anyway!

I decided to chime in with this anecdote, though, to bolster Todd's urging us to share our experiences on our cider journeys. I have charts, notes, and feedback from tasters I can share. Not at the moment, but I'll try to make it a priority to do so in the future and going forward. In the meantime, thanks to those of you who share your wisdom on this forum more frequently!

P.S. One lesson: don't open bottles of cider until they're at least a year old

Craig Bickle  
Hap Woods  
Zone 6a  
East-Central Ohio

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

[David Maxwell](#)

[Re: Sharing your cider apple experience](#)

March 19, 2023 03:39PM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 197

I am a rank amateur at this, but can perhaps contribute one minor observation: I have 30+ trees of various cider cultivars, including 4 trees of Sweet Coppin, (a British medium bitter-sweet, originally from Devon, dating to the 1700's). It is phenomenally productive; fully 50% of my annual harvest of cider cultivars comes from these 4 trees. Even with my neglect, (I never get around to thinning them), they bear annually. (A few years back I did make a rather desultory attempt to thin the fruit spurs). They seem to be both both completely scab resistant, and naturally pest resistant.

I have never tried making a single variety cider from them, and cannot comment on the taste qualities, but have seen reviews suggesting that they have a "typical Devon cider" flavour. Basically a good source of sugars, a relatively soft tannin, and low acid.

I should add that I am on the South Shore of Nova Scotia, on the Atlantic coast, zone 5b maritime climate. My trees are mostly on Alnarp-2 roots with 8" Ottawa-3 interstems.

[Broomholm Orchard](#)

Zone 5b in Nova Scotia

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

[Matthew Mullet](#)

[Re: Sharing your cider apple experience](#)

June 29, 2023 05:17PM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 14

Just to revive this thread a few observations of cider apples from my orchard this season:

Early-to-mid blooming cider varieties on MM111 (most 7-10 years old) have fared very well and set a ton of fruit and I'm not seeing much (if any) blossom or shoot blight on Nehou, Amere de Berthecourt, Harrison, Golden Russet, Kingston Black, Porter's Perfection, Bramtot, Muscadet de Dieppe, and Domaines. I applied a only a single fixed copper app with stylet oil around silver tip / green tip on most varieties except the extremely late ones. I also followed up with a few spot-applications of Agriphage.

I think the fixed copper did the job. I have a giant old Kieffer pear that I planted when I first moved here that has never had fireblight. I left it until the end of the copper spray run and just didn't bother with it because I ran out right as I pulled up to it. About a month+ later I was examining a young Akane apple tree that was showing shoot blight all over and I could not figure out why until I turned around and saw blossom and shoot blight just covering the Keiffer. So okay—fixed copper works.

Dabinett, Yarlington Mill, and Binet Rouge have not fared well given how little bloom they had and how much fb infection they're showing. I had a lot of infection in my Dabinetts last year so it's becoming routine.

Given all this—I've been in the midst for about 5 years now of transitioning anything that can't hang in relatively mild fb conditions (cool

and dry like we had this spring) to seedling varieties. I'm building a repository of apples from Matt Kaminsky's (Gnarly Pippins) Pomological Series, other cider people, and about 5 of my own discoveries. Building a resilient / tolerant orchard that doesn't require constant spraying and maintenance is the goal and a lot of us are on this track now.

Matt  
Fredericksburg, OH  
Zone 6a

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 06/29/2023 05:52PM by Matthew Mullet.

[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](#).