

WHY NOT GO...

OUT ON A LIMB

CSA NEWSLETTER #1

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WHAT'S IN YOUR SHARE THIS WEEK?

Your share this week is a mixture of summer apples and early fall apples. These apples are not “keepers” so enjoy them now, and don’t try to store them for winter. We’ve included some apples that are best cooked and others that are considered “dessert apples” which means they should be eaten raw or “out of hand.” Our desire is to expose you to as many different varieties as we can and to still give you enough of a few varieties to use them in cooking. Some of the apples you are receiving this week are extremely rare, and the crop is small. Even though we only gave you one or two of some of them, we thought that you would like a taste. Here is what you’ll get to sample:

- **Charette** (Sandy River Orchards - conventional)
- **Garden Royal** (Super Chilly Farm - grown using organic methods - not certified)
- **Milton** (The Apple Farm - conventional IPM)
- **September Ruby** (Super Chilly Farm - grown using organic methods - not certified)

- **St. Lawrence** (The Apple Farm - conventional IPM)
- **Wealthy** (Sandy River Orchards - conventional)
- **Whitney Crab** (Sandy River Orchards - conventional)

In the following descriptions we have suggested how you might use the varieties in your share. While some of these apples have a reputation for one use or another, we suggest that you experiment and try them in all sorts of ways. Try them in combination with one another. The best pie, after all, might be a mix of varieties. Whatever you try, we're sure you won't have any trouble finding people willing to taste a new batch of applesauce or sample a new pie recipe.

Charette: Unknown parentage. The only known mature tree is on Charette Hill in Fort Kent. The massive tree, thought to be about 200 years old, is still producing large crops. Often called "Donut Apple," the blossom end of the large fruit can be sunken in toward the stem so much so that when cut perpendicular to the core, the slices resemble donuts. Thought to have been brought south into Maine by French missionaries. This apple might be the result of someone planting an Alexander seed. Alexander was brought to Maine from Russia via England in 1813 and somewhat resembles Charette. (Alexander is known to be one of the parents of the equally large Wolf River.) Charette is an extremely hardy variety that performs best in northern districts.

For such a large apple, Charette has surprisingly good flavored fresh. All of us detect bananas in there. We think Charette is a much better dessert fruit than other huge apples, such as Wolf River. Cooks up into a very good, light pink sauce. The banana hints disappear, and other spicy flavors show up. No need to add sugar. The textured sauce is not creamy and the skins chew up easily. As a baked apple, the flesh became soft, and the flavor reminds us of bananas flambé (yum).

Garden Royal: Unknown parentage, Sudbury, MA, about 1790. Garden Royal is one of the more famous dessert apples of the past. AJ Downing, in the 1860 edition of his *Fruits and Fruit Trees of America*, calls it "very tender, juicy, rich, vinous, aromatic, a beautiful and excellent fruit." Garden Royal fell out of favor as commercial nurseries and commercial orcharding became popular.

The tree itself grows slowly in the nursery and rarely produces large crops. (Commercial agriculture strikes again!) The apple was introduced by a Mr. Bowker in Sudbury, Massachusetts, where there is still a "Bowker Drive." In 2010 John gave a talk about the apple to a group of Sudbury residents, and they are currently on the look-out for old trees in that area.

Our Garden Royal apples have "sooty blotch" this year, a harmless fungus that all apples will attract if they are not sprayed with fungicides. Sooty blotch has no taste and does not affect the quality of the fruit in any way. The fruit also may have some residue of "Surround," an organically certified clay powder we spray on the fruit. Just wash or rub it off. We suggest that you eat Garden Royals fresh, alone or with cheese.

Milton: Yellow Transparent x McIntosh, New York Station, 1923. In the early 20th century breeders at the New York State Fruit Testing in Geneva were breeding McIntosh with various old heirlooms. Milton is the result of a Mac crossed with the old Russian summer apple called Yellow Transparent. The cross was done by Richard Wellington in 1909 and released 14 years later.

Although mostly known as a cooking apple, we like Milton as a dessert fruit as well. Cooks up very quickly into a smooth, creamy, thick, yellow sauce. The skins become soft and almost dissolve. We suggest adding some spices to the sauce to enhance its flavor. In a pie taste off, Rob and John liked the taste of Milton, but John Paul and Cammy preferred the tartness and texture of Wealthy. The crust holds up although the apples do become saucy.

St. Lawrence: Thought to be a Fameuse seedling, Canada, 18th century or possibly brought to Canada from Europe by the French. Some think that it may be one of the parents of McIntosh. One of the most classic of the old summer apples, it is still found here and there throughout Maine and is even grown in some northern commercial orchards. It is one of the most distinct of the historic apples due to its pronounced deep-red stripes.

Good texture for a dessert fruit - crisp and tart with hints of lemon. Often recommended for pies, it does make an acceptable single-variety pie, although we think it would be best combined with other varieties. Not as firm after baking as the best pie apples should be,

and not as flavorful on its own. A recent pie-taster commented, “This is the pie I would have liked when I was a kid,” an assertion supported by the 10 year old who voted it the best pie in the taste-off. We also recommend it for applesauce.

September Ruby: PF 36 (Rescue x Haralson) Agr. Canada Res. Sta., Morden, Manitoba, 1986. This is only modern variety in the share this week. John grafted September Ruby onto a tree in our orchard a few years ago from some scionwood he received from Alaska. It is extremely hardy.

We think of this as a dessert fruit – snappy, crunchy, juicy and way better than red delicious which it slightly resembles. Good tasting, sub-acid flavor that brings to mind Vinho Verde. It has a nice texture and a fragrance reminiscent of cider. Although we haven’t cooked with the apple, none of us imagine it would be best for cooking.

Wealthy: Cherry crab seedling, Excelsior, MN, 1868. One of the most famous of the hardy, all-purpose varieties, Wealthy is considered to be one of the best of all pie apples.

If you want to try a single-variety crisp or pie this week, try one with Wealthy. At peak ripeness, the flavor is more sweet than tart, and the texture is soft without being mushy. Just before it’s ripe, the pie flavor tends to be slightly tart. It’s also a good acid source for fermented cider. Our old friend, long-time orchardist, 96-year-old Francis Fenton of Sandy River Orchards, believes Wealthy—not McIntosh—should be the favorite commercial apple of northern New England. The trees his father planted in Mercer 105 years ago are still going strong.

Whitney: AE Whitney introduction, Franklin Grove, Illinois 1869. The Whitney tree is hardy, vigorous, heavy bearing; it blooms pink and white. It is considered to be a crabapple (an apple under 2" in diameter).

Said to be excellent for pickling and jelly, although we have not tried it. We consider it to be a dessert variety and encourage you to eat them fresh. One year at Common Ground Fair, Whitney beat out Cox Orange Pippin and Chestnut in our taste test. We were amazed. The fruit looks similar to Chestnut but is a bit pinker.

WHO'S PICKING YOUR APPLES?

Every year Super Chilly Farm depends upon a small crew of enthusiastic MOFGA apprentices to help us in a wide range of projects—from growing the food that we eat, to tackling homesteading pursuits to caring for and harvesting our apple crop. This season is no exception and we'd like you to meet the current Out on a Limb crew that that will be bringing you your apples every other week.

John Paul Rietz is from central Ohio, but lately he also calls New England "home." A few years ago he decided that a homegrown and handmade life was the way to go, so that's why he started apprenticing with John and Cammy in 2010. From August until early June, apples are a staple food for John Paul, and he is bold enough to tell you that his favorite variety is Black Oxford.



Eliza Greenman – Transplanted from tidewater Virginia, Eliza has devoted her recent years to community sustainability organizing for the Island Institute in Maine. A forester by training, Eliza believes fruit trees are the nexus between forestry and agriculture. The Cranberry Isles owe many pruned trees

to her handiwork, and she is the only member of the Out on a Limb crew to have an apple variety named after her family.

Rob Stenger – Born and raised on the St. George Peninsula in Mid-Coast Maine, Rob is a fruit-tree enthusiast who is happy to be learning about Maine’s many native apple varieties. When he is not picking apples, he spends his time sea kayak guiding along the coast. Prior to joining the Out on a Limb crew, Rob and Eliza spent the last Northern Hemisphere winter managing a small permaculture farm in New Zealand; they are now implementing permaculture design elements into a new orchard at Super Chilly Farm.



Regina Fitzsimmons is an Arizona desert dweller experiencing her first "Fall" in New England. She’s starting to think that “Super Chilly” might not be a joke. When she's not sneaking apples out of the root cellar, she's likely pestering the other apprentices by snapping photographs of them picking apples and making pies. Back at home in

the toasty southwest, she likes goofing off with her dog, swimming and hanging out in the kitchen. She writes about her cooking successes and flops at <http://reginarae.com>.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR APPLES:

A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE RECIPES

Rob's Favorite Apple Pie

Crust: Use your favorite two-crust pie dough

Ingredients for the Filling:

6-8 cups apples, cored and sliced (approximately 5 large apples)

Our recommendation: Milton apples for a softer, sweeter pie; Wealthy apples for a firmer, tarter pie.

$\frac{3}{4}$ -1 cup sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup white flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon

1 tablespoon butter/margarine

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, combine sugar and flour. Core and slice apples, peeled or unpeeled, depending on preference. Toss slices with flour mixture until thoroughly coated and set aside.
3. Roll out pie dough using the pie tin as a guide. The bottom layer of dough should be wide enough that $\frac{1}{2}$ " excess dough drapes over the pie tin.
4. Fill bottom crust with reserved apples, piling them in a centered mound above the level of the pie pan. (Note: The apples will cook down as they bake.) Sprinkle cinnamon on top of the apples and dot with butter. Place reserved pie dough on top of the apples; crimp dough with bottom layer by pressing a floured fork around the edges of the pie tin. Using a fork or sharp knife, poke ventilation holes in the top of the pie dough.
5. Place pie on top of a baking sheet (to catch spillage) and bake for 15 minutes. Decrease the heat to 350 degrees and bake for an additional 30-45 minutes until top is golden brown and apple juices are bubbling.
6. Remove from oven and cool for 30 minutes. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

Autumn “Coleslaw” with Dates, Apples and Pecans

Ingredients for the Slaw:

8 cups green or purple cabbage, shredded
3 large, firm apples, cored and cut into matchsticks

Our recommendation: St. Lawrence

1 cup dates, chopped
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pecans, toasted and chopped
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cilantro, chopped
1 small early onion/shallot, thinly sliced

Ingredients for the Dressing:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground pepper
2 tablespoons honey, *optional*



Method:

1. In a large skillet, toast pecans, stirring frequently on medium-low heat until fragrant and slightly browned (approximately 8-10 minutes).
2. Meanwhile, quarter cabbage; lay each section on its side and slice into thin strips with a sharp knife. Set shredded cabbage aside in a large bowl. Chop dates, cilantro and onion and combine with cabbage.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk dressing until incorporated. Pour onto shredded cabbage and toss. Let sit at least 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with toasted pecans. Leftovers will keep, but slaw is freshest the day of.

Quick Bread & Butter Apple Pickles

Ingredients:

4 medium-sized pickling cucumbers, thinly sliced

4-5 small/medium apples, unpeeled, cored

(Our Recommendation: St. Lawrence & Garden Royal)

1 tablespoon sea salt

2 early onions/shallots

1 cup apple cider vinegar

½ cup water

½ cup honey

1 cinnamon stick

Method:

1. Prep cucumbers: Cut off ends, discard, and thinly slice with a cabbage shredder, mandolin, food processor or sharp knife. Place cucumber slices in a colander and toss with sea salt. Let sit for 20 minutes. Prep apples and onions using the same slicing utensil—aim for uniform thinness and size.
2. In a small bowl, whisk vinegar, water and honey until full incorporated. Add cinnamon stick and pour dressing over apples and onions.
3. Rinse cucumbers and lightly dry. Add slices to bowl with apples and stir well. Let sit for at least 30 minutes before serving. Refrigerate for up to two weeks.

