



Orchard news

With a slow autumn limping towards us once more, the apple harvest is in full swing and the presses are flowing. Many varieties are hanging late this year, so it's fortunate that summer hung around long enough to ripen them all up properly. We've seen a lot of 'watercore' around so there's a piece about it below, along with info about some new features on the PTES website, and a brief sojourn into variety names to cap things off.

Budding news

Apple day events calendar

Apple day, officially on the 21st of October, is the modern day Harvest Festival of orchards. Every year more of these spring up around the country so we are listing them on an [events calendar](#). Started by the landscape charity Common Ground in 1991, they can be anything from local village gatherings to major city-scale events attended by thousands. Regular features are an apple pressing and juicing service, identification of people's unknown varieties, apple themed food, games, and crafts, music, cider and fruit and tree sales.

Many are held in community orchards so look up your local one on our [Community Orchard map](#). If you're taking an unknown apple from your orchard for ID, make sure to pick plenty of varied examples, all with the stalk intact and if possible without insect damage, as one is rarely a very reliable sample size.

FruitFinder

As a dedicated reader of this newsletter, you probably know that there are thousands of fruit varieties growing in the UK. But do you know which varieties are local to your county? Or is there one named after your home town? If you're looking for something special for your garden or orchard [FruitFinder](#) will help you find it.



There are around 5,000 top (tree) fruit varieties growing in the UK, many of which have roots in a particular geographical area, such as the apples 'Carlisle Codlin' and 'Severn Bank' for example, or those that are particularly suited to certain areas such as apples with scab resistance for the wetter areas of the UK. FruitFinder contains a list of every known UK grown variety, providing a way for you to discover varieties that were raised and grown local to you and their use in the kitchen, on the table or in the mill, as well as listing links to places that sell them. This makes it easy to discover and plant your local fruit heritage, which will help prevent these varieties being lost over time.

News from another project - A call to action from Fruit-full Communities

The Fruit-full Communities project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, aims to address some of society's biggest challenges including lack of social cohesion, lack of opportunities for young people, climate change and environmental degradation. Through the Fruit-full Communities project thousands of young people living at or attending YMCA centres across England will gain confidence, learn new horticultural skills and improve their local environment by planting and nurturing a network of 50 orchards across the country. We're now looking for 20 YMCAs that will use an orchard grant of £3K and our support and advice next year to plant an orchard on their own site or a community site nearby. We're also looking for volunteers who have a passion for fruit and nut trees and would love to support YMCAs on their fruit-full journey! To find out more about the project click [here](#) and if you are interested in supporting a YMCA near you please contact Renata Pidduck on rpidduck@lfl.org.uk

To keep up-to-date with the latest orchard news follow [@PTESOrchards](#) on Twitter

In the orchard

P+D Corner

The ripening of fruit in traditional orchards is rarely without problems, but in a traditional orchard pests and diseases rarely devastate the entire crop. Here's a few to watch out for:

Watercore

Not really a pest or a disease, but rather a disorder. Causes of watercore are not fully understood, but one common factor is hot days and cold nights as the fruit is reaching maturity. This year's sweltering September Indian Summer is a case in point and watercore seems to be prevalent. With this disorder the flesh of the apple becomes saturated with liquid. In severe cases the effect goes right up to the skin giving the apple a glassy transparent look (as in the picture), but as the name suggests, the effect begins in and around the core. The taste and texture is entirely changed. In some varieties the flavour is actually considered better and apples affected this way are reported to be considered a delicacy in (...where else) Japan. The wet texture is slightly challenging for our less adventurous European palates.

The moisture is not just water, it is sorbitol, or sap, that has rushed in and filled what would normally be air spaces between cells. Sorbitol is a sugar-alcohol, the purpose of which is to act as an anti-freeze, so eating apples with watercore can apparently get you drunk. Ahh, suddenly interested eh?



Apple showing signs of severe watercore



Section of same apple

Sun scorch

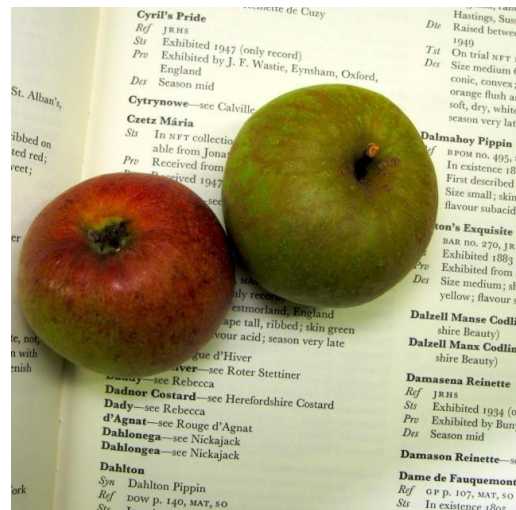
This is another disorder rather than a disease... maybe this should be called 'disorder corner'. It goes without saying that this is caused when the sun gets too hot and turns them into rot. Any apple picked on a sunny day will be deliciously warm on the sunny side, but occasionally, as with the few exceptionally hot days we have had this so called autumn, the effect is too much for the apple to take and it gets slightly cooked at the sunward extremity. The flesh and skin then dies leaving a slightly repellent, unsightly, squishy blemish. The apple is generally not ruined right through, but obviously won't store. Some varieties are more vulnerable than others.



Annie Elizabeth apple with sun scorch

What's in a name: the story of synonymy

When Muriel Smith wrote the bible of apple names, the *National Apple Register of the United Kingdom*, she whittled 22 000 named varieties down to 6000. The 16 000 discarded names were considered synonyms of the 6000 retained, and there may be more but since many varieties in the register haven't been seen since the latter part of the 19th century, and have only very basic descriptions, it is impossible to know for certain. One apple alone, the German 'Edelborsdorfer', has 158 synonyms listed. But how did this come about?



A common vehicle of name-changes is lack of records and poor memory leading to renaming. The gage or greengage, as it's known in English speaking countries, is a classic example. In the rest of their cultivated extent they are called Reine-Claude or variations thereof (reinklode, ringlotte, ringle, ringló, ringloty...) and have been since the 16th century, but when in 1724 Sir William Gage imported the first of them to the UK the labels were apparently lost in transit so a new name was devised. Whether or not Sir Gage thought of it himself is not recorded. An altogether fishier agent of synonymy is the Victorian plant breeder. Parallel to the increasing wealth of the late 19th century was the emergence of the Head Gardener. This high-ranking member of every stately household was under immense pressure to prove his mettle by producing new varieties of plants to name after the Lords of the Manor or the family seat, so it wasn't uncommon for an existing apple variety to be released under a new name. Production of a new variety was a lucrative business (and remains so) and plant breeders were keen to meet the market's demand. Indeed, between the end of the 19th century and first half of the 20th, prolific breeder Frederick Wastie and his namesake son released up to 50 'new' varieties. Some of these are now lost, but at least fourteen appear to be genuine and still exist in the National Fruit Collection, but sixteen more that made it to the National Fruit

Trials, as they were then called, were found to be identical to other varieties and discarded. I'm not saying the Wasties were thoroughly rotten apples (and what the heck, they can't sue me anyway), but questions need to be asked.

More innocently, most synonyms are merely spelling or language variations but the range of variation is intriguing: it's like reading a map of linguistic evolution. Take for example the old English apple that started its life around 1676 as 'Golden Pippin'. Among its variations are the words Gold, Gould, Goud, Gol, Gale, Gelbe, Goule, Golden, Gouden, Goulden, Guolden, Gulden, Goudeling's, d'Or, Dorée, and Doré. The 'Pippin' epithet faired little better – Pippin, Peppin, Pepin, Pepping, Pippeling, Pippelin, Peppelin, Pepelin, Peppius, and Pipe!

Even today in the age of mass-communication, spelling errors often sneak in and old nameless varieties are propagated under new names. If more evidence is found or another example of the variety surfaces with its name intact, then the new name is kept as a new synonym.



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