

A Walk Through the Heirloom Apple Orchard,

Regina Donald **November 15, 2025**

Apple taxonomy

Family: Rosaceae

Genus: *Malus*

Species: ***M. domestica***

Grafting

- Provides more variety of apples
- Increases pollination and yield
- Allows choice of rootstock and tree size
- Decreases cost of tree
- Space saving
- Provides fruit over a longer season
- Can decrease time to fruit production
- Its FUN!

Heirloom or Heritage Apples

Preserving diversity: Growing heirloom apples helps preserve genetic diversity, which acts as a safeguard against diseases that could devastate a monoculture of modern commercial varieties.

Living history: Many heirloom apples have a rich history, with some being documented for hundreds of years and their origins sometimes tied to historical events or figures.

Connecting with the past: They offer a way to connect with the past, as many were enjoyed by people in previous generations.

Preserving the Past

Lee Calhoun, Tom Brown, and Tom Burford

Self Pollinating or partial self pollinating apple trees include Granny Smith, Golden Delicious, Gala, Cortland, Grimes Golden, Braeburn, among other

Triploid apples have sterile pollen. Some of the best-known triploid varieties are Ashmead's Kernel, Belle de Boskoop, Blenheim Orange, Bramley's Seedling, Dula Beauty, Gravenstein, Jonagold, Crispin / Mutsu, Ribston Pippin, Newtown Pippin, Roxbury Russet, Winesap, Zabergau Reinette

Pollination requirements

1. At least two varieties old enough to bloom
2. Compatible bloom times
3. Triploid trees can't pollinate other trees
4. Self-fruitful varieties enhance pollination
5. Avoid direct descendant trees

Apple varieties that store well

Granny Smith: Known for thick skin and tartness.

Fuji: A modern variety with excellent keeping qualities.

Honeycrisp: A newer, very popular variety that stores well.

Pink Lady (Cripps Pink): A good keeper that lasts for months.

Northern Spy: An old heirloom variety that is an excellent storage apple.

Cosmic Crisp: Stores well for months.

Winesap: A classic storage apple.

Gold Rush: Stores extremely well, with some sources saying it can last up to a year.

EverCrisp: A hybrid of Honeycrisp and Fuji that was specifically bred for storage.

Apple trees with disease resistance include:

Scab Resistant: Liberty, Enterprise, William's Pride, and Gold Rush.

Fire Blight Resistant: Liberty, Enterprise, Pristine, and Arkansas Black.

Cedar Apple Rust Resistant: Liberty, Enterprise, Gold Rush, and Novamac.

Powdery Mildew Resistant: Liberty, Enterprise, Pristine, and Honeycrisp.

Other Disease Resistant: Dwarf apple trees (generally more resistant to diseases), Freedom, Elstar, and Crimson Crisp.

Common apple diseases/pests

Plum curculio (insect)

Cedar apple rust (fungus)

Apple scab (fungus)

Fly speck and sooty apple blotch (fungus)

Fire Blight (bacteria, *Erwinia*)

Resources

“Growing Apples in Virginia” published by the Virginia Cooperative Extension (Pamphlet)

“Old Southern Apples” by Creighton Lee Calhoun (Watercolor Plates)

“Apples of North America” by Tom Burford

“Apples of Uncommon Character” by Rowan Jacobsen

“Wild, Tamed, Lost, Revived” by Diane Flynt (Cider)

“The Apple Grower: A Guide for the Organic Orchardist” by Michael Phillips

www.growingfruit.org site for like minded fruit growers

Skillcult (Steven Edholm) pruning and grafting series, You Tube

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Grafted Tree Information

1. Newly grafted trees are still healing. Use care when moving or planting them. By year 2, the grafts are stronger and more stable.
2. Its ok to plant the tree in the ground as long as the ground is not frozen and can be worked.
3. Place potted trees in a protected area outside away from strong winds or storms. A layer of mulch or straw around the outside of the pot and on top of the soil can be helpful to prevent freeze. Trees do not need inside protection.
4. Water your new tree well when you get home. Trees can benefit from additional watering if the weather warms in the winter.
5. There may be some remnants of grafting material over the graft area. Plastic wrap and remaining black tape will degrade with time. Don't try to remove them or you may injure the graft.
6. If planting, place the graft union at least 2 inches above the ground. Remove any branches that grow from under the graft union. This is rootstock growth and takes away energy from your little tree.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at wilbournhouseorchard@gmail.com A photo may be helpful

I hope you enjoy your tree!!!! *Regina*