

An apple-a-day

Ontario apples are an integral part of everyday living. Sayings such as "An apple a day . . .", as easy as apple pie", "You're the apple of my eye", and many more, pay tribute to the esteem with which the apple is held. Just how good is your apple I.Q.? Try the following true or false quiz to find out.

— The apple is one of the most ancient of fruits.

True — Carbonized apples have been found among the remains of prehistoric dwellings.

— Today's apples are similar to the apples of ancient civilizations.

False — Ancient apples were only 1 to 2 inches in diameter and quite acidic and astringent.

— The McIntosh apple was discovered in Ontario.

True — The world-famous McIntosh apple was named after John McIntosh who discovered the tree on his homestead in Dundas County, Ontario in 1811.

— The best way to pick an apple is to grasp firmly and tug.

False — The best way to test for maturity of an apple when picking it, is to turn it upside down while still attached to the tree. If it snaps off, it's ready.

— The apple and the rose have nothing in common.

False — They are both members of the botanical family Rosaceae. (But we wouldn't recommend a rose-a-day.)

If you guessed 5 out of 5 correct, you are an apple authority.

Know Your Ontario Apples

Different varieties of apples have varying levels of tartness or sweetness.

For cooking, combine 2 or 3 varieties when blends of flavour are as important as the texture and shape.

AVAILABILITY	VARIETY	DESCRIPTION
mid-August-early September	JERSEYMAC	medium size; slight conical shape; red with yellow green shoulder; excellent eating apple
late August-late September	PAULARED	medium size; roundish shape; solid, dark red colour; very firm; tart, crisp flavour; good for fresh eating and in pies.
mid-September-late June	McINTOSH	medium size; irregular round shape; deep red with green splash on one side; aromatic, white, juicy flesh; mildly tart, becoming sweet as ripened; excellent for fresh eating and in pies and sauces.
October-January	SPARTAN	medium size; round conic shape; dark red blush over faint stripes; crisp, juicy and fairly tart; excellent for fresh eating and pies.
October-January	GOLDEN DELICIOUS	medium size; elongated, narrowing to 5 point base bright yellow colour, firm; medium tart to sweet taste; excellent for fresh eating and in pies.
October-March	NORTHERN SPY	large size; bright red stripes; firm; tart taste; excellent for pies and baked apples.
October-early April	CORTLAND	large size; globular shape; red-orange stripes; crisp, mildly sweet; good for salads since they resist browning.
October-early April	RED DELICIOUS*	large size; elongated, narrowing to 5 point base deep red; crisp; juicy, mild sweet flavour; excellent for fresh eating.
October-May	EMPIRE	medium size; oblong shape; dark red stripes with conspicuous dots; firm; slightly tart; excellent for fresh eating and in sauces.
December-May	IDARED	medium to large size; round to flat round; bright red with greenish-yellow patches; very firm; tart; very good fresh or baked.

*This variety is not recommended for cooking purposes.