

An Apple A Day

A Quarterly Health Education Newsletter from the U.S. Apple Association

INDUSTRY INFORMATION

2003 U.S. Apple Harvest Gets Underway

When is Delicious both Red and Golden, and when do mountains of Fujis move to grocery stores nationwide? When the new crop of U.S. apples is harvested, of course!

The 2003 U.S. apple harvest is now officially underway, and there is plenty of new skinny about this old food favorite this year: more flavors, new pre-cut products and health research news suggesting apples may help us *get* skinny, among other health benefits.

According to the U.S. Apple Association's (USApple) forecast, when the last apple is picked off the tree later this fall the 2003 apple crop will total 216.2 million

This scene is now being repeated across the country. (Source: USApple photo CD)



bushels — about 94 apples for every man, woman and child in the United States. While this year's crop is slightly smaller than the average in recent years, there will be even more choices at the marketplace, say industry experts — and lots of new proof that we should be eating that “apple a day” after all.

New Varieties, Fresh-Cuts Offer More Choice

Apples may be an ancient food, but a thoroughly modern U.S. apple industry is well tuned into consumer demands for more variety and convenience products.

“Today's consumers want fast,
See HARVEST, page 4

RESEARCH NEWS

Aussies Report Apples, Reduced Asthma Link

Australian researchers studying the relationship between diet and asthma reported earlier this month that, among the fruits and vegetables they studied, eating apples and pears appears to provide the best protection against this growing health risk.

Asthma is a serious and growing U.S. health threat and can be deadly if not properly managed. The American Lung Association reports that in 2000, nearly 5,000 Americans died from asthma, or nearly two of every 100,000 Americans. Federal data indicates that at current rates 31.3 million Americans will be diagnosed with asthma in their lifetime, and that diagnosis rates are increasing substantially.

Asthma is a major children's health issue, as children aged 5-17 are most likely to be diagnosed with asthma than persons 18 or older. Asthma strikes women more often than men, and numbers are highest in the African American community.

Diet has only been recently identified as a potential risk factor for asthma, and the Australian study sought to provide clarity regarding research evidence found to date.

The cross-sectional Australian study involving 1,607 young adults aged 20-44 was published in this month's issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (cite: *Am J Clin Nutr* 2003; 78; 414-21.) Of all the fruits and vegetables studied, study participants who ate apples

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It's H-apple-y Halloween Time!

Ah, fall! The air dev-elops a chill, Mother Nature begins applying her fall paint pal-ette to the trees, and our thoughts turn to crunchy new-crop apples, tangy cider and... Halloween, of course!

In addition to being National Apple Month and the peak of the U.S. apple harvest, October is also Halloween time. Halloween has its roots in ancient harvest traditions, born of Celtic harvest festivals more than 2,000 years ago. At the same time our ancestors celebrated harvesting nature's bounty, as the dark of winter approached they believed that on this particular evening spirits roamed. Costumes and masks



helped our Earth-borne ancestors avoid recognition of those from the Otherworld, and they offered up sweets to avoid being the subject of tricks by evil-minded spooks.

Today, Halloween is for fun and frolic. As soon as the calendar page is turned, young ghosts and goblinettes turn their thoughts to costumes, gags and goodies, and those great Halloween celebrations.

And no tricks here: Apples and apple foods such as 100 percent apple juice and cider are also healthy fall treats that parents and teachers can feel good about giving to their little ones.

Author Donata Maggipinto offers up some seasonal recipes and crafts for the whole family's fun in her book *Halloween Treats*. Many feature those fall seasonal favorites, apples and apple cider, including the caramel apple recipe, shown right. ■

H-apple-y Halloween food and craft ideas:

Here are some fun ways to incorporate apples into your Halloween celebration:

- Make caramel apples (see recipe, below).
- Bob — without getting wet — by hanging apples by their stems from strings from the ceiling.
- Serve party finger snacks in carved-out apple jack-o'-lanterns.
- Include small apples, bagged apple chips or other apple snacks in party favor bags.
- Make apple-print placemats: Cut an apple horizontally, dip in red or green fabric paint, and print on khaki-colored placemats.
- Make an apple centerpiece: Built a pyramid of different colors and sizes of apples, held together with toothpicks and accented with paper leaves and cranberries. ■

RECIPE BOX

Caramel Apples and Pears

Author's note: The petite Lady apples and Seckel pears are just right for making kid-sized caramel treats... If children are helping, they can carefully dip the apples and pears in the caramel and granola. An adult should supervise the fun as hot caramel can burn. I use natural licorice sticks (found in natural foods stores) because they look eerie and they're edible too.

- 12 natural licorice sticks, cinnamon sticks, or bamboo skewers, each 6 inches long
- 6 Lady apples (or small apples, if not available), stems removed
- 6 Seckel (or other small) pears, stems removed
- 2 cups granola
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup dark corn syrup
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 3 Tbsp. water
- 4 Tbsp. (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 cup heavy cream

Insert a licorice stick, cinnamon stick or bamboo skewer into the stem end of each apple and pear. Spread the granola on a baking sheet; reserve. Have ready one or more cooling racks or a large sheet of parchment paper for cooling the caramel fruits.

In a saucepan over low heat, combine the sugar, corn syrup, vanilla extract and water. Cook, stirring, until the sugar melts. Add the butter and cream, raise the heat to medium-high, and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the caramel registers 240°F on a candy thermometer, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool for two minutes.

One at a time, dip the apples and

pears in the caramel, twirling and swirling them to coat completely. Dip the tops in the granola to coat them, then transfer to the cooling rack or parchment paper to cool. As the apples and pears cool, the caramel will set. Store the caramel apples and pears, wrapped in cellophane if desired, in a cool, dry place until ready to serve or up to two days. Makes 12.

(From *Halloween Treats* © 1998 by Donata Maggipinto, photographs by Richard Jung. Used with permission of Chronicle Books LLC, San Francisco. When reprinting this recipe, cite its source. To order, visit www.chroniclebooks.com.) ■

Maggipinto's caramel apples and pears



Apple Equivalents

Need to know how many apples are in a pound? Recipe calls for sliced, chopped or grated apples? Here are some handy conversion information.

- 1 pound = 4 small apples OR 3 medium apples OR about 2 large apples
- 2-1/2 pounds = 1 9" or 10" pie (4-5 large OR 6-7 medium OR 8-9 small apples)
- 1 peck = 10-1/2 pounds
- 1 bushel = 42 pounds

Size	Diameter	= Sliced, Chopped	= Finely chopped	= Grated	= Sauce
1 Large	3-3/4"	2 cups	1-1/2 cup	1-1/4 cup	3/4 cup
1 Medium	2-3/4"	1-1/3 cup	1 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
1 Small	2-1/4"	3/4 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/3 cup

FOR APPLE INDUSTRY MEMBERS

Apples Eligible for New Anti-Cancer Statement

U.S. apples, apple juice and applesauce can now be labeled with a new statement promoting fruits and vegetables' cancer-fighting capabilities, and USApple is encouraging U.S. apple industry members to pass the good news on to American consumers.

The new "dietary guidance statement" unveiled in July informs consumers that, "Diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some types of cancer and other chronic diseases."

It is the result of a collaborative effort between the National Cancer Institute, the government sponsor of the "5 to 9 A Day - For Better Health" program, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The statement can be used on packaging and signage, and in

advertising and other materials. One hundred percent apple juice and cider, and processed apple products containing no added sugars or fats, are also eligible to use the statement.

The new dietary guidance statement is the result of an FDA program launched late last year. The Consumer Health Information for Better Nutrition initiative is designed to make more and better information about foods and

dietary supplements available to consumers, to help them make sound dietary decisions and improve their health.

For more information, contact USApple's Julia Daly by telephone at (800) 781-4443, or via email at jdaly@usapple.org. ■

"Diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some types of cancer and other chronic diseases."

- NCI and FDA

FAQ

Q Can I grow my own apple tree from seed?

A If you planted a seed from that great apple you had for lunch, the resulting tree won't bear the same variety of fruit. Instead, it will bear a variety that draws from that apple's genetic makeup — that includes the varieties that were your apple's parents, and their family trees too.

The same genetic selection process applies here that we learned about in middle school biology that determines what eye color a human baby will have — the possibilities include mom's caramel brown peepers as well as paternal granddaddy's baby blues.

So, every apple seed could produce a new variety. This is in part why more than 7,500 apple varieties were identified worldwide the last time they were counted!

Commercial apple trees are not grown from seed for this very reason. Instead, apple growers use grafting to produce trees that will bear fruit of a desired variety.

To create an apple tree of a particular variety, orchardists graft a twig, called a scion, from the desired "parent" tree onto young rootstock (the part of the tree that includes the tree base and root ball.) The scion contains buds from which twigs and leaves will sprout and a tree will eventually grow. The trees are protected in nurseries for 1-2 years after they are grafted, before being replanted by the grower in an orchard.

Budwood of different trees can even be grafted onto the same rootstock, creating a tree that will bear multiple varieties of apples. Next time you visit your local tree nursery, check out their apple trees — chances are pretty good you'll find such a tree!

Have an FAQ for us? Email it to jdaly@usapple.org.



Study Is Latest On Lung Health

RESEARCH (from page 1)

and pears had the lowest risk of asthma. The researchers noted that more study is needed to determine whether changes in diet could be used to prevent asthma or lessen its severity.

The Australian study is the latest research to suggest we might breathe easier — literally — by eating apples. See the Educator section of USApple's Web site at www.usapple.org for a list of other recent lung health research updates.

While the recent studies suggest apples' high content of plant-based compounds called flavonoids to be the potential health benefactor, the Australian study did not identify specific nutrients as being protective, but rather pointed to the whole food.

"We found that the consumption of whole fruit, in the form of apples and pears, did protect against asthma," wrote Dr. Rosalie Woods and her colleagues. ■

Spread the Word!

We hope you enjoyed this issue so much that you will share it with your friends! Persons interested in subscribing can contact USApple to get your own free e-mail subscription! Here's how:



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Fresh-Cut Slices Are Tasty Time-Saver

HARVEST (from page 1)

no-fuss, no-mess foods whether they're assembling ready-to-eat or heat-and-eat ingredients into meals at home or eating on the go — and they aren't willing to sacrifice taste or nutrition in the process," says Harry Balzer, consumer trends expert with the NPD Group, whose recent analyses have documented the exploding convenience food movement. "Foods that can supply the added comfort factor also are still trending hot with consumers."

In response to Americans' demands for greater variety, apple growers have branched out their production, bringing new apple varieties to the marketplace to join old favorites. Up-and-comers to watch for include spicy-sweet Braeburn, sweet-tart Cameo®, juicy sweet Honeycrisp and zingy Pink Lady®. Nationally, sweet and mild Red and Golden Delicious remain perennial favorites and the top two varieties grown, followed by crispy, sweet Fuji and Gala, introduced to the U.S. market in the mid-1990s. Tartly sassy Granny Smith, tangy-tender McIntosh and baker's buddy Rome round out the top-six variety list.

Joining these new fresh-market varieties in the produce department are bagged, pre-cut apple slices, now making their debut in markets across the country. Building on the pre-cut craze begun by bagged salads and baby peeled carrots, sliced apples will provide an added element of convenience for brown baggers, salad fans, dippers and snackers-on-the-go.

As public awareness of the U.S. obesity epidemic and the need to make more healthful food choices grows, ready-to-eat apple products, such as sauce and 100 percent juice and cider, pose easy ways to get on your way to the five to nine daily produce servings

recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid.

Other hot apple trends to watch for this season, according to the U.S. Apple Association:

- Ready-to-eat applesauce and ready-to-heat sautéed apples as deliciously easy side dishes with high comfort food factor.
- Natural-style (unsweetened) and artificially sweetened applesauces for carb watchers
- More single-serve options, including kid-friendly sauce cups, tubes and 100 percent apple juice boxes and resealable bottles
- Family-size, table-suitable packaging for meal time
- Renewed interest in apple juice from health- and taste-minded adult consumers
- Year-round availability of that fall favorite, apple cider
- Savory apple butter as a gourmet sandwich spread and cheese pairing

"Apple a Day" Gets Makeover

On the health front, research is now providing modern proof of that old adage about an apple a day keeping the doctor away. The list of potential apple health benefits continues to broaden, with new research adding to the growing list of studies suggesting apples may protect lung health. (see story, page 1.) In April, Brazilian researchers reported apples may speed weight loss (see that edition of *An Apple A Day*.)

There is also plenty of evidence suggesting that the benefits of the whole food convey to foods made from it, including 100 percent apple juice. University of California at Davis researchers reported in 2000 that apples and apple juice reduce an important marker for heart disease.

For other recent apple health research updates, visit the Educator section of USApple's Web site, at www.usapple.org. ■



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