

# Penn State Extension

## Fruit Trees in the Home Garden

Penn State Cooperative Extension

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### Apple Varieties Recommended for Home Planting in Pennsylvania

#### Scab-Resistant Apple Varieties

Scab-resistant apple varieties are varieties that are not susceptible to apple scab, the most important disease in the Northeast. These varieties have been bred genetically for immunity to this pathogen. As a result, fungicides are not needed to control apple scab throughout the growing season. Scab-resistant apple varieties are, however, susceptible to the summer fruit diseases, including black rot, white rot, bitter rot, sooty blotch, and flyspeck, and they vary in susceptibility to cedar apple rust, powdery mildew, fire blight, and leaf spots. In certain regions and summers, sooty blotch and flyspeck can cause extensive fruit blemishing. These blemishes are only superficial and can be partially rubbed off. They cause the fruit to look unsightly but do not affect taste. These two diseases can be minimized by training and pruning the trees to increase air circulation and reduce humidity in the canopy.



None of the scab-resistant apple varieties are completely immune to cedar apple rust. Even those rated as rust resistant will need fungicide protection from rust if they are planted adjacent to cedar trees that harbor this pathogen. It is advisable to remove the cedar trees if possible. To ensure high fruit quality, fungicides still will be required on scab-resistant varieties; however, fewer will be needed than on highly scab-susceptible varieties such as Empire, McIntosh, and Red Delicious. The number of fungicides applied on scab-resistant varieties also will depend on the particular season, especially if it is extremely wet.

Scab-resistant apple varieties are excellent choices for the home gardener. The fruit are of reasonable quality and can be produced with only a few pesticide applications each year. These varieties make harvesting fresh apples from late July through October possible (Table 1).

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**Table 1. Scab-Resistant Apple Varieties**

Variety	Characteristics	Ripening Period	Disease Rating <sup>b</sup>		
			CAR <sup>a</sup>	PM	FB
<b>Pristine</b>	Very early, medium-sized yellow apple, pleasant tart flavor with a smooth, attractive finish.	Late July to early August	M	R	M
<b>Williams Pride</b>	Early, dark red-purple apple. Large fruited. Semi-tart flavor. Sometimes shows water-core or bitter pit.	Mid-August	R	M	R-M
<b>Redfree<sup>d</sup></b>	An early, red-skinned, sweet summer apple. Crisp. Does not have a long storage life.	Late August to mid-September	R	R-M	R-M
<b>Crimson Crisp<sup>a</sup></b>	Rich flavor with moderately acidic and a spicy aftertaste. Bright red fruit with cream-colored flesh	Early September	M	M	S
<b>Liberty<sup>d</sup></b>	Mid season, high quality dessert apple. Most disease resistant. Flavor improves after storage.	Mid- to late September	R	R	R
<b>Freedom</b>	Mid-season, large fruit, spicy flavor. Rough external appearance. Fruit quality varies. Susceptible to black rot.	Mid- to late September	R	R	R-M
<b>Jonafree</b>	Mid-season, firm, red apple, slightly tart. Flavor improves after storage. Similar to Jonathan.	Mid- to late September	S	R	M
<b>Scarlet O'Hara<sup>c</sup></b>	Large round fruit with medium red to orange color. Rich, pleasant, slightly spicy flavor.	Early to mid-October	R	M	S
<b>Sundance<sup>e</sup></b>	Medium-sized fruit with a sweet, tart flavor. Yellow fruit with some russet.	Mid-October	R	M	R
<b>Enterprise<sup>d</sup></b>	Good-quality, late-season, smooth, glossy red apple similar to McIntosh. Stores well. Susceptible to a fruit spotting disorder.	Mid-October	R	M	R
<b>Goldrush<sup>d</sup></b>	Excellent quality fruit, good storage apple. Very late maturing Golden Delicious type. Fruit may russet.	Late October	S	R	M

**Notes**

a. CAR = cedar apple rust; PM = powdery mildew; FB = fire blight

b. R = resistant; M = moderate; S = susceptible

c. A newly released scab-resistant variety

d. Has performed well in taste tests

## Standard Apple Varieties

Traditional apple varieties (Table 2) also can be grown in the home orchard. The varieties listed in the table were selected for their popularity and availability. Some of the newer varieties such as Gala, Fuji, or Jonagold are especially valued because of their fruit quality. When choosing these varieties, the orchardist should be aware that a more intensive pesticide program must be followed to obtain marketable fruit.

Some apple varieties such as Red Delicious and Golden Delicious also are available in various strains. A strain is a mutation of a certain variety that has been selected and propagated for an improved characteristic. A strain might differ in fruit characteristics, growth characteristics, or both. Some varieties have many strains; for example, approximately 250 different strains of Red Delicious have been described and cultivated.

The most common strain difference that the backyard grower should be concerned about is spur strains versus nonspur strains. Spur-type growth is more compact since fruit spurs and leaf buds are closer than those on nonspur trees. On spur types, two-year-old wood will usually form fruit buds rather than develop side shoots. As a general rule of thumb, spur strains of a given variety will result in trees only about 60 to 70 percent as large as the nonspur types of that variety. Because of their compact form of growth, spur types are ideally suited for home gardeners with limited space.

An OUTREACH program of the College of Agricultural Sciences

### Reference:

This handout has been adapted from *Fruit Production for the Home Gardener*, published by Penn State University in 2006.

This publication can also be viewed on-line at <http://ssfruit.cas.psu.edu/default.htm>.

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**Table 2. Apple Varieties Not Resistant to Apple Scab**

Variety	Characteristics	Ripening Period
<b>Jerseymac</b>	Early McIntosh type. Crisp, red apple of excellent quality. Good for eating, sauce, and pies.	Late July to early August
<b>Zestar!</b>	Medium to large, red-over-yellow fruit. Flavor is well balanced. Slightly sweeter than tart. Flesh is crisp and medium to coarse. Good for fresh eating and sauce.	Early to mid-August
<b>Ginger Gold</b>	Golden-type apple ripening in mid- to late August. High-quality, russet-free fruit. Good for eating fresh and pies.	Mid-August
<b>Gala</b>	Orange-red fruit, sweet and hard with high quality. Developed in New Zealand. Good for eating fresh and sauce.	Late August to September
<b>McIntosh</b>	Old-time favorite. Purchase new high-coloring strains. Available as a spur type. Good for fresh eating, pies, and sauce.	Early September
<b>Honeycrisp</b>	Large, explosively crisp, and juicy fruit. Fruit color is red-over-green ground color. Weak-growing tree. Fruit may show bitter pit when the trees are young.	Mid-September
<b>Delicious</b>	Most popular commercially grown variety. Available in spur and nonspur strains. Good for fresh eating.	Early to mid-October
<b>Empire</b>	Dark-red apple of excellent dessert quality. An all-purpose apple that keeps well. Good for fresh eating, pies, and sauce.	Mid- to late September
<b>Golden Delicious</b>	Excellent all-purpose apple. Heavy producer. Avoid spur strains because they tend to russet more than nonspur strains.	Late September to early October
<b>Idared</b>	Popular older variety. Produces large, mildly tart, red fruit that keeps well. Good for all uses.	Early to mid-October
<b>Jonagold</b>	Developed in New York as a cross between Jonathan and Golden Delicious. High-quality fruit. Develops a red blush over yellow skin. It is a triploid and produces sterile pollen (see section on pollination). Good for fresh eating, sauce, and baking.	Early to mid-October
<b>Mutsu</b>	Cross between Golden Delicious and Indo. Very large, light-green to yellow fruit. It is a triploid and produces sterile pollen. Good for fresh eating, pies, sauce.	Mid-October
<b>SunCrisp</b>	Golden-type apple that can develop a red or orange cheek in cooler years. Unusual cinnamon spice-flavored fruit. Tastes better after a period of storage. Good for fresh eating, sauce, and pies.	Mid- to late October
<b>Fuji</b>	Developed in Japan. Late-ripening apple. People located above Interstate 80 might have difficulty in maturing the fruit each year. There are, however, some early maturing strains available, such as Daybreak and September Wonder. Very firm, red-over-green fruit that is sweet. Stores extremely well in regular refrigeration. Good for fresh eating and pies.	Late October
<b>Braeburn</b>	Newer apple variety that ripens in late October. Red-over-green fruit that is semi-tart but very firm. Good for fresh eating and sauce. Do not plant if you live north of Interstate 80.	Late October