

Homemade Apple Cider

The most special tree in my family's apple orchard grew alone in the nearby pasture. It was a wild apple tree with old and gnarly branches. The apples were small but their flavors were intense. We called it "The Cider Tree."

We mixed apples from this wild tree with our 'Honeycrisp' and 'Honeygold' apples to make a sweet cider that was rich and flavorful.

Homemade apple cider is delicious! There is nothing better on a cold day in winter. After sliding down snowy hills or shoveling snow as a boy, I can recall the aroma of hot cider in the kitchen and the warmth of the mug comforting my frigid fingers.

You can grow your own cider (sweet or hard). It's one of the most popular trends in fruit growing today.

Cider trees can be ordered now for 2019. There is a shortage of cider apples in the USA and many cultivars of cider trees will be sold out before spring. You won't find these trees at your local nursery. They need to be ordered from fruit nurseries as bareroot trees. A sampling of nurseries includes Cummins, Fedco, Grandpa's Orchard, Maple Valley, Raintree, Stark Bros. and St. Lawrence.

Know your Hardiness Zone (3 or 4). *Standard* rootstocks are usually used in Zone 3. *Semi-dwarf* rootstocks are often used in Zone 4 because they bear crops earlier (4 years compared to up to 8 years for standard rootstocks).



A mug of hot apple cider is a special treat on a cold day.

Russet cultivars are known for their sandpaper skin, sweet flavor and outstanding cider. The hardiest russet is 'Minnesota 1734'. Other good cidemakers for Zone 3 include 'Whitney' and 'Chestnut' crabapples and 'Frostbite' apple. 'Frostbite' is a grandfather of 'Honeycrisp.'

Gardeners in Zone 4 have additional options. 'Golden Russet' has been called the "champagne" of ciders. 'Redfield' has red flesh that will make your cider turn blood red. Wow!

'Ashmead's Kernel' is famous for its pear-like flavor and rich aroma. 'Liberty' resists diseases and is easy to

grow. 'Cortland', 'Yarlington Mill' and 'Fameuse' will make great cider.

If you have room for a cider tree, I encourage you to try one. It will fill your home with warmth and wonderful memories.

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Plant Health Care

Fruits and Vegetables



Storing Carrots

Harvest after a couple light frosts and when the soil is dry. Gently remove soil.

Do not wash roots before storing. This promotes rotting and removes beneficial bacteria in the soil near the skin that fight decay. Wash roots only before you eat them.

Trim each top to ¼ inch. Longer tops will lead to more decay. Shorter tops will cause roots to dry. Put in perforated plastic bags to increase humidity and allow for air circulation. A cool (32–38°F), humid (95% RH) site is best.



Green Pumpkins

Blushing fruits will turn orange if exposed to sunlight and warmth. Place on a sunny deck or indoors near a sunny window; green side toward the sun. Keep indoors during hard frosts.



Storing Potatoes

Remove loose dirt and avoid bruising. Allow tubers to sit for a day to dry before storing. Place in mesh bags, crates or vented boxes. A dark, cool (40°F), humid (95% RH) site is best.



Apple Maggot

Fruits develop dimples (*left photo*) where flies laid eggs. Maggots hatch and create trails inside (*right photo*). Pick up fallen fruit. Hang traps in July to monitor for flies. Insecticides can protect fruits.



Storing Apples

Store in a cool (near 32°F), humid (90% RH), dark place. A refrigerator is best, but a cool root cellar or garage is okay. If refrigerated, store in perforated plastic bags to increase humidity.

Lawns



Spraying Weeds

Perennial weeds can be treated after a heavy frost if the leaves appear not to be damaged. Weeds must be active for the herbicide to move into the roots.



Seeding and Sodding

Do not sow grass seed now. The seedlings will not have enough time to get established. Sod can be laid until the ground freezes.

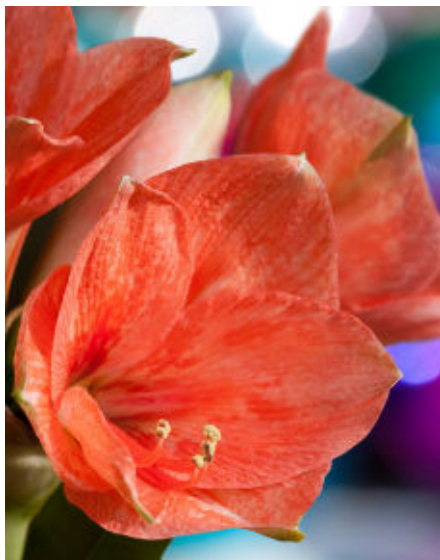


Trim Your Lawn

A tall turf attracts voles (damage is shown) and becomes more susceptible to mold. Cut your lawn at a normal height or slightly lower (1.5–2.0 inches).

Plant Health Care

Flowers



Jumbo Amaryllis

It's fun to grow amaryllis from a kit sold in big box stores, but this cannot compare to the joy of growing a jumbo bulb. Big bulbs (34/+ cm circumference) produce more flowers, more stems, have a longer flower display, and are more likely to bloom in the future. Most cultivars bloom in 8 weeks. Bulbs are available online and at the finest garden centers. Order now to amaze your friends over the holidays!



Species Tulips

Species tulips are easy to grow. They are often planted in clumps in rock gardens and used in naturalizing. These “wild” tulips are known for their simple charm and their long life in the garden.



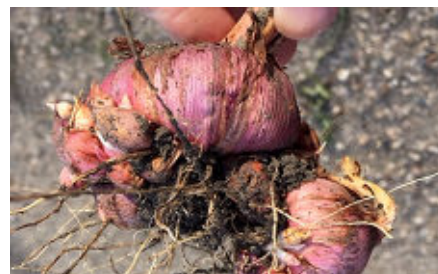
Plant Tulips Indoors

Set bulbs close; not touching; flat side against rim. Cover with soil so bulb tips are at surface. Water. Place in unheated garage (32–50°F) or refrigerator for 12–14 weeks. Bulbs will sprout and bloom.



Harvesting Sunflower

Harvest when the back of a head is banana yellow/brown, petals are dry, and seeds are plump. Cut the head and hang in a mesh bag. Dry for a few weeks in a warm, airy place. Rub out seeds.



Dig and Store Gladiolus

Shake off dirt; cut stems. Store in a warm, airy spot (garage) for 2–3 weeks. Discard the old, shriveled corm and keep new ones (at least ½ inch diameter). Keep cool (40°F) in labeled paper bags.

Trees and Shrubs



Protect Young Trees

Place white tree guards (*left photo*) around young trees for at least two winters to prevent cracking (*right photo*) and protect against wildlife. Linden, mountainash, maple and fruit trees are very sensitive; protect for up to five winters.



Fall Needle Drop

Old branchlets (located near the trunk) of this arborvitae are *supposed* to drop. Pines may lose about half their needles in one season. If young needles (located near the tips of branches) are healthy, the evergreen is full of life.



Many Seeds/Thin Canopies

When burdened with producing seeds, plants have fewer nutrients available to produce leaves/needles. In some cases, trees under severe stress produce large seed loads because they have a natural instinct to procreate before dying.

Weather Almanac for September 23–30, 2018

Site	FROST ^{1,2}		TEMPERATURE ²				RAINFALL ^{2,4}				GROWING DEGREE DAYS ^{2,5}			
	Norm	2018	Sep 23–30				Sep 23–30		2018		Sep 23–30		2018	
	(28°F)	(28°F)	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	09/27	09/25	40	51	61	23	0.00	0.34	9.63	13.23	15	50	2133	2073
Bowman	09/30	09/28	43	52	66	27	0.27	0.40	11.65	11.30	19	57	2142	2160
Carrington	10/05	09/28	43	53	62	27	0.00	0.46	9.61	15.31	15	57	2335	2235
Crosby	09/29	09/27	40	50	60	20	0.02	0.32	8.66	11.54	9	47	2106	1927
Dickinson	10/03	09/28	42	51	66	28	0.12	0.40	13.08	12.89	12	59	2277	2142
Fargo	10/05	Not yet	47	54	65	31	0.17	0.60	16.49	15.99	18	56	2683	2386
Grafton	10/04	09/28	42	52	58	25	0.09	0.58	12.94	15.66	7	53	2303	2089
Grand Forks	10/05	09/28	43	52	60	25	0.01	0.51	14.40	15.25	8	52	2408	2137
Hazen	09/27 ⁶	09/28	44	54	70	26	0.13	0.39	9.71	13.03	19	68	2257	2357
Hillsboro	10/06	09/28	44	53	63	24	0.05	0.58	14.23	15.68	13	52	2443	2253
Jamestown	10/04	09/28	43	53	64	26	0.11	0.51	18.96	14.95	12	52	2248	2212
Langdon	09/28	09/28	40	49	56	25	0.11	0.48	9.69	15.19	6	41	2020	1782
Mandan	10/01	09/28	44	53	70	25	0.15	0.40	15.12	14.07	17	56	2378	2227
Minot	10/07	09/28	42	51	61	23	0.01	0.37	9.30	13.31	13	46	2259	2028
Mott	09/28	09/28	43	52	69	24	0.61	0.36	9.73	12.11	20	62	2272	2238
Rugby	10/04	09/28	41	51	59	26	0.00	0.47	10.28	14.92	11	52	2195	2069
Wahpeton	10/04 ⁷	09/28	47	56	72	28	0.29	0.70	16.31	16.75	21	60	2616	2494
Watford City	09/25	09/28	42	52	65	25	0.14	0.27	9.55	11.06	12	59	2271	2152
Williston	09/29	09/28	43	55	64	25	0.13	0.31	11.06	11.03	14	67	2272	2428
Wishek	09/27	09/28	44	52	68	28	0.15	0.32	14.18	12.72	17	52	2255	2034

DAYLENGTH (Oct 1, McClusky, center of ND)³

Sunrise: 7:40 AM Daylength: 11h 43m
 Sunset: 7:23 PM Change since Sep 24: –24m

LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS¹

Oct 7–11: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal
 Oct 9–15: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

^{1,2,3}Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, respectively.

⁴Measurements begin April 1.

⁵GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F, respectively.

^{6,7}Frost data for Beulah and Campbell, respectively.

Credits

Sources:

Online catalogs of Cummins, Fedco, Grandpa's Orchard, Maple Valley, Raintree, Stark Bros. and St. Lawrence nurseries. Accessed September 2018.

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Written by Tom Kalb, who expresses gratitude to the NDSU educators who contributed to this report: LeAnn Beck, Marissa Leier, Rick Schmidt and Yolanda Schmidt.

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