Celebrating America's Unique Apple Diversity: Selected Literature

Special Reference Briefs Series no. SRB 2010-02

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September 2010
Updated September 2011

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- 1754-1899
- 1900-1927
- 1928-1959
- 1960-Current

Introduction

“Why do we need so many kinds of apples? Because there are so many folks. A person has a right to gratify his legitimate tastes. If he wants twenty or forty kinds of apples for his personal use, running from Early Harvest to Roxbury Russet, he should be accorded the privilege. Some place should be provided where he may obtain trees or [s]cions. There is merit in variety itself. It provides more points of contact with life, and leads away from uniformity and monotony.

--Liberty Hyde Bailey, The Apple Tree, p. 68
(New York: Macmillan, 1922)

This bibliography is a selected compilation from the rich pool of information resources at the National Agricultural Library about heirloom apples. It consists of a list of books and reports at the Library dating prior to
1928, with the addition of later books which focus on the subject of varieties of apples grown in the American past. It is organized into sections first by date and then in order of the author’s last name.

The bibliography was prepared in conjunction with the presentation “Celebrating America’s Unique Apple Diversity: A Roundtable Discussion Featuring Some of America’s Leading Apple Experts,” held on September 17, 2010, to mark 2010 as the Year of the Heirloom Apple. Participants represented the range of America’s apple growers, and included Dr. Gary Nabhan, Ben Watson, Nick Botner, Tom Burford, John Bunker, Dan Bussey, and Lee Calhoun.

Books listed in the bibliography were identified by a search of AGRICOLA, the Library’s online catalog, and a search of the Dictionary Catalog of the National Agricultural Library, 1862-1965, the Library’s printed reproduction of the card catalog as it was maintained prior to 1965. The Experiment Station Record, a printed index to the reports of State agricultural experiment stations, was also searched for the years 1889-1930.

For the convenience of the reader, the bibliography is organized into several date ranges. The first group contains books prior to 1900 that demonstrate apple varieties being grown primarily in America with the addition of some listings of varieties that were likely to have been imported. The next group contains items dating from 1900-1927. Following this period, when subsistence farming became less common and grocery stores became an affordable source of produce, apple growing became more consolidated and apple varieties dwindled.\(^1\),\(^2\) The next grouping, 1928-1959 reflects this as research begins to center on a smaller number of varieties. Based on a review of the literature, it wasn't until the 1960s and 1970s that, realizing the loss of many of the choicest apple varieties, writers begin to focus on cataloging the old varieties.

All of the items in the bibliography are available to the public for examination. Most of the items can be brought down from the Library stacks for use in the Reading Room. Some of the rare materials can be viewed in the Special Collections department. An appointment is necessary to visit Special Collections; contact our staff at 301-504-5876 or at http://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov/contact-us-0 to set up an appointment. People who would like to use the Library’s collection but are not near the National Agricultural Library may wish to go to their own local libraries and inquire about Interlibrary Loan services. The National Agricultural Library’s policies and procedures on Interlibrary Loan are available at http://www.nal.usda.gov/nal-services/request-library-materials.

We hope that this document will be useful to heirloom apple enthusiasts, breeders, and researchers.

\(^1\) Creighton Lee Calhoun, Jr., Old Southern Apples (Blacksburg, Virginia: The McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company, 1995), 16 & 37


1754 - 1899


6. Buell, Jonathan S. 1874. The cider makers' manual : a practical hand-book, which embodies treatises on the apple; construction of cider mills, cider-presses, seed washers, and cider mill machinery in general; cider making; fermentation; improved processes in refining cider, and its conversion into wine and champagne; vinegar manipulation by the slow and quick processes; imitation ciders; various kinds of surrogate wines; summer beverages; fancy vinegars, etc. Buffalo: Haas, Nauert & Co.


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Abstract: This handwritten notebook contains Absalom Donahoo's records of the apple cultivars he was testing for potential commercial production in Nebraska City, Otoe County, Nebraska. His lands was south of Nebraska City on Highway 75.

15. Downing, A. J. 1845-1900. Fruits and fruit trees of America, or, the culture, propagation, and management, in the garden and orchard, of fruit-trees generally; with descriptions of all the finest varieties of fruit, native and foreign, cultivated in this country. multiple editions. In the 1900 edition, 1098. New York: J. Wiley.

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1960-CURRENT


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