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News & Notes of the UCSC Farm & Garden

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News & Notes of the UCSC Farm & Garden

Issue 124, Winter 2010

Learning to Know & Appreciate Russeted Apples

– Orin Martin

The purpose of writing this article on russeted apples is threefold:

- To consolidate my own thinking, reflections, appreciation and passion for russets.
- To nudge folks to break out of the Fuji, Honeycrisp, Jonagold and especially Gala rut. It's not that these varieties aren't good, but it's time to open a new "door of perception," to quote Aldous Huxley.
- To describe some russeted varieties, list tree sources and encourage, nay, urge people to buy, plant, grow, and eat their own russets.

Russeted Apples—A Classic "Keeper"

Russeted apples harken back to colonial times when apple varieties were regional, that is, had a reputation and cult-like following in an arc that extended only a few hundred miles or less, giving true meaning to the much-championed "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" marketing slogan of the present. Generally, these apples had a short fresh market season. Back then, russets were renowned as "keepers." Put them in a box and store them in a cool room (<40°F) or a root cellar; under such conditions, they would keep in reasonable shape for 3–6 months.

Today's apples tend to be red, round and smooth-skinned. And they better follow suit with the superlatives: sweet, sweeter and sweetest. And they better be big and oblong to conical in size and shape, à la Golden and Red Delicious.

Russets are anything but. Variety to variety and even apple to apple on the same tree, almost everything about the look of russets—their size, shape, coloring, and skin—is uneven or anomalous (an=not, homalos=even). Both the texture and the color of the flesh are variable. However, the taste and aroma are somewhat uniform, combining both "green" and sugary backed by acidity and a touch of nuttiness. Russets often drift toward subtropicality with hints of citrus, guava and even pineapple. In the aggregate, they are a cut above—sublime.

Shape and Size

Most russets are small to medium in size and have a shape that is classified as round-flat or oblate. Often they are as wide or wider than tall. Two notable exceptions regarding shape are: Hudson's Golden Gem and Hoople's Antique Gold. Both are either bud mutations or seedlings of Golden Delicious. As such they tend to be oblong-conical with 5 distinct knobs at the base, much like their parent. Both varieties vary in shape apple to apple; this is especially true of Hudson's, which is more than occasionally lopsided.

Skin and Color

Russets tend to either look or be rough to the touch. The skin can even be corky, bumpy or warted. The variety Knobbled Russet takes this to an extreme—with its frog-like skin, it's positively amphibian. They often look like they have a bad case of apple scab (a fungal disease). The topography of the skin even has its peaks and valleys. Some varieties exhibit heavy and rough russetting much like a baking potato or a Bosc pear. Still others have only an irregular light webbed russetting and can actually be smooth skinned. These varieties (Ashmead's Kernel, Roxbury Russet, American Golden Russet) usually display a flushed cheek of copper, bronze or orangeish-red coloration at full maturation.

In one sense, russets have a drab appearance, and yet they have a quiet, strong beauty. They are as they look, apples with both a story and a history, personality and depth of character—an apple lover's apple. Russets are definitely not Galas, with all due respect, Gala being an inoffensively sweet apple suited to the school lunch box

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crowd. Russets are truly beautiful as well as utilitarian, and eating a russet is a long, layered, thought-provoking experience. Sometimes, after first admiring and then consuming a Roxbury Russet (and not just because I'm from Boston) or an American Golden Russet, my conclusion: best darn apple I ever ate, or could ever eat.

Taste

While not all russets taste alike, they do share some taste characteristics. They usually start out sugary, followed by balancing acidity. Volatile aromatic oils usually factor in. The russet experience can make the eater feel they have taken a temperate zone, deciduous fruit and sailed off to subtropical latitudes where the evergreen fruits rule supreme: citrus (especially lemon), guava, banana, pineapple, etc. At the same time (in sequence) you are experiencing the sugar, texture and cell grit of a pear. The latter sensation is most pronounced with Hudson's Golden Gem.

Uses

Utilitarian is definitely the byword with russets. They are equally good fresh off the tree or stored for up to six months, dried, baked or made into crisps or pies and rendered to cider—sweet and hard.

Varietal Descriptions of Some Favorite Russet Apples

Hudson's Golden Gem (a found hedgerow seedling from Hudson's Nursery in Tangent, Oregon, 1931, probably an escaped seedling of Golden Delicious). Similar to its parent in shape: long, oblong-conical. Arguably the largest and definitely the sweetest of the russets, with an uncanny knack for throwing variable lopsided fruit. The skin is dry and rough to the touch. The color is a dull, soft faint yellow background with mottled, dotted russetting in the foreground. Sugary and juicy with a similar taste and texture (pear cell grit) as pears and a little nuttiness for good measure.

American Golden Russet (1700s, New York). Possibly the second-oldest American variety; likely a seedling of English Golden Russet, which is far sweeter, more lively and complex in flavor. A small round-flat apple with rough-looking, streaked uneven russetting and corkiness around the stem basket. The skin has bronzy hues with a copper splotch on the sunny side and a golden-green background color. Flesh color is creamy yellow with a tinge of green at the core. The flesh is dense and fine textured, which is an exception among russets. The taste is intense and sugary at the outset, followed by a balanced but pronounced kick. A slight oily, volatile aromatic aspect to the latter part of the taste sensation. Mature fruit hangs on the tree as late as leaf drop.

English Golden Russet (1600s, England). Far superior to the American Golden Russet. I once had a highly productive tree on dwarfing M9 rootstock (7–8' tree) that cropped beautifully and abundantly for 15 years. One dark December day, I yanked it out and have rued the

day. It is almost impossible to source in this country. A smooth-skinned, medium-sized, uniformly round apple with, as the books say, "light fawn colored" russetting that tends to gold. The skin gets bronzy with a flush of coppery-orange at full maturation. The flesh is fine grained; as such, it tends to dissolve in the mouth. It has a yellow tinge to it and is crisp, exceedingly juicy and off the charts sugary. Aromatic qualities balanced with a following acidity beget a lively taste on the tongue.

Egremont Russet (1870s, origin unknown but probably England). A medium-sized apple with a flat-round shape, sometimes almost blocky-rectangular. Very rough russetting of the skin with a good deal of checking or cracking, especially in the stem basket; the dark russetting can appear almost black with a gold/bronze background. The skin is tough and chewy (best discarded), giving way to a greenish-yellow, densely textured flesh that is nutty, sweet and aromatic. It has a distinctive sweet/tart taste with some smoky overtones thrown in for good measure.

Russet Beauty (thought to be a chance seedling of a cross between Cox's Orange Pippin and Golden Delicious). An early September russet that is atypically large fruited, round-oblate in shape. A uniform bronzy-golden fawn with many small bumps. The flesh is crumbly-coarse and the taste is decidedly sweeter than Golden Delicious with a nice Cox's nutty acidic aftertaste. Doesn't hold long on the tree before going soft and mushy (10–14 days).

Roxbury Russet (out of the Roxbury district of Boston, early 1600s, thought to be the first US bred apple variety). Looks and tastes like a smaller version of Hudson's Golden Gem. This variety features a creamy white flesh and a thin non-chewy skin. The flavor is very sugary, with translucent sugar swirls (it's actually a precursor to a storage disorder called water core) in the flesh. A slight lemon scent and a following acidity and greenness that balances the initial sugary sensation. For a refined smoother eating experience, couple with sliced extra-sharp Cheddar (of New England origin). But then, that recipe works for all the russets.

Ashmead's Kernel (Gloucester, England, 1700). An asymmetrical small apple with a flat-round shape. The color is golden brown with a reddish-orange, sometimes bronze flush on the cheek; the flesh is crisp, coarse, yellowish-green. The taste is sugary enough, but with an assertive, aromatic acidity. Not an apple for the faint of heart. Late harvest, mid-October to mid-November. Good in cider blends

Gold Rush. Although it looks old, it is of recent vintage (1992), introduced from the low/no-spray (disease-resistant and immune) collaborative breeding programs of Purdue, Rutgers and Illinois Universities. An outstanding tart/sweet fresh off the tree, and sugary/tart after 1–2 months in cold storage. Although it is generally assertively tart fresh picked, more than occasionally you can find a sweet one. The sugar in its taste can be credited to

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late Winter/mid Spring Calendar

In-Depth Winter Pruning – Pome Fruits

Saturday, February 6, 10 am – 2 pm
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Learn how to prune your apple and pear trees from Orin Martin and Matthew Sutton. Wear warm clothes and bring a snack; heavy rain cancels. \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public. *Note: rainout date is Saturday, February 13.*

In-Depth Winter Pruning – Stone Fruits

Saturday, February 20, 10 am – 2 pm
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Learn how to prune your plum, apricot, cherry, and other stone fruit trees from Orin Martin and Matthew Sutton. Wear warm clothes and bring a snack; heavy rain cancels. \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public. *Note: rainout date is Saturday, February 27.*

Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop

Sunday, March 7, 1–4 pm
Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Ave, Santa Cruz

Taught in collaboration with the California Rare Fruit growers, this hands-on workshop will cover the basics of grafting fruit trees. Come “make and take” a fruit tree! \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public; free for members of the California Rare Fruit Growers.

Raising Chickens (& Ducks!) in Town

Saturday, March 13, 10 am - 1 pm
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Learn how to raise and care for chickens and other poultry in an urban environment.



Taught by Paul Glowaski and Cooper Funk, founders of “Urban Eggs,” this workshop will cover the basics of tending small flocks in town, including coop design, breeds, and disease and predator control. Bring a snack. \$20 for Friends members; \$25 general public.

Controlling Gophers & Other Vertebrate Pests

Saturday, March 20, 10 am - 1 pm
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Thomas Wittman, founder of Gophers Ltd., shares his expertise in controlling gophers and other vertebrate pests in your garden. Learn the latest techniques for protecting your plants and lawn from damage. Bring a snack. \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public.

Starting Your Garden from Seed

Sunday, March 28, 10 am - 1 pm
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Celebrate the start of spring! Gardening instructor Trish Hildinger leads this lecture and hands-on class designed for beginning and intermediate gardeners who want to learn how to start vegetables and flowers from seed. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a snack. \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public.

Bees and Beekeeping

Saturday, April 17, 10 am - 1 pm
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Learn the basics of honey bee natural history and beekeeping from James Cook of Meder Street Farms. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a snack. \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public.

Planning and Planting the Spring Garden

Sunday, April 25, 10 am - 1 pm
Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Join Orin Martin and Trish Hildinger to learn how to choose appropriate varieties, improve and prepare the soil for spring planting, and transplant starts. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a snack. \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public, payable the day of the workshop. This is a great way to prepare for the Farm & Garden’s Spring Plant Sale the following weekend, May 1 and 2!

If you’d like more information about these and other upcoming events, need directions, or have questions about access, please call 831.459-3240, email casfs@ucsc.edu, or see our web site, casfs.ucsc.edu.

For a complete list of 2010 events, see casfs.ucsc.edu/community/calendar.html

Please note that we cannot accept credit card payments for classes or merchandise (cash or check only).

No pre-registration or reservation required for workshops, unless noted.

Co-sponsored by the Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems at UC Santa Cruz, and the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden.

Grow a Farmer 2010 — Kitchen Renovation Needed

We kicked off the Grow a Farmer campaign in 2009 to raise funds to house students in our Apprenticeship training program on the UCSC Farm. Thanks to the campaign's success, the housing project is well underway and we're looking forward to its completion by April, when the new crop of apprentices arrive to begin their six-month intensive course in organic farming and gardening.

Now that we've secured the Apprenticeship's training program with permanent housing, we need to make some major facilities upgrades at our 25-acre teaching farm. Our highest priority is the renovation of the Farm Center's kitchen. Built by students in 1976, the Farm Center is truly the heart of the farm. The kitchen fuels the new farmers while building a community through shared meals of food grown, harvested, and cooked together. Apprentices take turns cooking for the whole crew every day, with the kitchen churning out food for 45 people three times a day, 700 servings a week, over 22,000 meals a season.

In 1992, the original Farm Center kitchen was renovated into a certified kitchen. Seventeen years later (and over 400,000 served!), it is in serious need of an overhaul to meet the campus's basic health and safety standards. Our goal is to raise \$25,000 to complete a number of upgrades this winter. We welcome gifts from individuals and businesses, small or large.

So far this effort has raised over \$18,000, including a \$5,000 gift from Meg Cadoux Hirshberg and Gary Hirshberg, and gifts from many other former apprentices. For more information and to donate to this effort, see the Grow a Farmer website, www.growafarmer.org, where you can donate online. If you have questions or would like to send a donation check for the Farm Center kitchen, please send it to:

Apprenticeship Gifts	831.459-3240
CASFS, UCSC	831.459-2799 (fax)
1156 High St.	growafarmer@ucsc.edu
Santa Cruz, CA 95064	

Please make checks payable to the UCSC Foundation. All donations are tax deductible.

We want to acknowledge all the support from former apprentices for the Apprenticeship Program. We specifically want to recognize Corey Block for her support of an apprentice scholarship.

Our thanks also go out to the Dash family, who generously donated \$1,000 toward a scholarship for a participant in the Apprenticeship Program in honor of their mother, Honore Dash. Their support through the years is very much appreciated!

Simply Organic Establishes Scholarship Endowment

Simply Organic has announced the establishment of a scholarship award in perpetuity for the Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Simply Organic and Frontier Natural Products Coop have made a combined contribution of \$130,000 to the UCSC Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems.

"This is the premiere, sustainable and organic training program in the U.S. During my visit in August, I was impressed with the quality of the program—and even more so with the apprentices enrolled in the program," says Kathy Larson, Vice President of Sustainability at Frontier. "Establishing this scholarship empowers a new generation of sustainable agricultural leaders, who otherwise might not have the opportunity to participate in advanced training and contribute to the organic community."

Each year, one apprentice will receive tuition assistance to learn better organic farming techniques, develop and evaluate new ideas to tackle issues of inequality in the food system, and integrate social and natural science research, academic and experiential education, and public service to transform the food system. The Frontier Foundation donated \$60,000, while the remaining \$70,000 came from the Simply Organic One Percent Fund (SO1%), which is generated by one percent of sales on all Simply Organic products.

SO1% supports organizations and events that further education, training and growth in the organic industry. "Each time you buy a Simply Organic spice, seasoning or mix, you make a small contribution—that when combined with many others—provides significant support to organizations and projects that research, develop, teach and promote organic agriculture," says Kory Kazimour, Simply Organic senior brand manager.

Interest in the Apprenticeship program is now at an all-time high, with a record 187 applications received this fall for the 39 positions in the 2010 apprenticeship.

Today, more than 1,300 apprentices have been trained in the organic fields, orchards, and greenhouses at UC Santa Cruz, learning not only how to raise food and flowers, but how to make the food system itself more sustainable by addressing issues of social justice. They are organic farmers, market gardeners, urban agriculturalists, school garden teachers and others—all working to promote local, healthy food in communities around the country (see updates on page 7).

Our thanks to Simply Organic and Frontier Natural Products Coop for supporting this important training program and our efforts to "grow" new farmers.

Working around the Rains

El Niño has finally made its appearance in the Monterey Bay region. With the “storm door” now wide open, soils have turned soggy and knowing when—or whether—to work the soil becomes a challenge.

I asked Christof Bernau, garden manager at the UCSC Farm, his advice for working with wet soil. His response: “don’t.” According to Bernau, digging and planting in saturated soils can lead to the dreaded 4 Cs: compaction, clumping, clodding, and crusting.

As anyone who’s made (and dried) mudballs can tell you, compressing wet soil creates a slick, hard surface. “Working wet soil will pack soil particles tightly, leaving less room for water and air to penetrate,” writes B. Rosie Lerner of Purdue University. “The compression forms tight clumps of soil that become hard as rocks upon drying and are difficult to break up. In addition to making it difficult for plants to grow, compacted soils also tend to drain more slowly, in turn delaying the ability to work the soil after the next rainfall.”

“Once compacted,” she continues, “it will take many years to rebuild a healthy soil structure, requiring annual applications of organic matter, such as composted plant and animal wastes or perhaps growing a green manure crop.”

Along with damaging soil structure, planting into wet soils can ultimately hinder the plant’s development. “You may create soil clumps that the plant roots can’t penetrate, and when you dig a planting hole the sides of the hole can get compacted to the point that the plant becomes ‘trapped’ in that hole,” says Bernau. “If you do the work when the soil’s too wet, you may find that the plants don’t prosper.” This is particularly true of soils with a high clay content; sandy soils are less vulnerable to this type of compaction.

So what is one to do during this season of bare root planting? Hindsight being 20-20, the best thing would have been to prepare planting holes for new trees, roses and cane berries in the fall, when the soil was still relatively dry and workable. “At that point, you can mulch the surface and when the bare root plants are available you can scrape the mulch away, and put your plant in with a minimum of soil disturbance.”

If your planting holes aren’t ready yet, Christof recommends waiting as long as possible after a heavy rain—a minimum of a week, preferably two—before working the soil. “Try and find a window between storms, or in advance of a heavy storm,” he says.

If you’ve purchased bare root plants and the soil is too wet to work, you can keep the plants dormant by “heeling” them in (i.e., planting them temporarily) at a 45° angle with tips facing north, on the north side of the house. Dig a shallow trench and cover the roots with garden soil, sand, or wood chips to keep them moist. If you only need to wait a few days to plant, keep the plants in their packaging in a cool, shady place such as a shed or garage and make sure the roots stay moist.

When you’re ready to plant, Bernau recommends placing the plants in a water-filled wheelbarrow or large bucket of water for up to an hour before planting to keep the roots from drying. Although the soil may be wet when you plant, it’s important to lightly water to make sure the soil settles around the roots.

And even now, with the storms upon us, it’s not too late to protect the soil from compaction by spreading wood chips, straw, or other surface mulch. With that done, sit back, gaze out the window, and enjoy the rains.

— Martha Brown

Help Bring the Farm & Garden Facilities and Equipment into the 21st Century!

We celebrated our 40th anniversary two years ago, with awards and accolades for our successful track record as an organic training and education program. In these 42 years we have used our slim funds to support education efforts, and have not had the needed funds to properly keep up the physical farm and garden. We now are faced with 40 years of deferred maintenance, from fences and irrigation lines, to tractors and other essential farm equipment. Our current list of most pressing needs is below, representing purchases or repairs we must make this season with specific cost estimates for each item. Gifts to the Farm & Garden Facilities Fund will help support this work in the order prioritized by the staff. If there is an item that you are specifically interested in supporting, please contact Ann Lindsey at alindsey@ucsc.edu or (831) 566-3779.

Wish List Top Ten – February 2010

- New Kubota tractor—\$25,000 (with educator discount through C&N Tractors)
- New mechanical spader—\$10,500 (with educator discount from Ferrari tractor)
- Vegetable packing shed (Veggie Shed) repairs—\$3,000
- Fruit tree spray rig (for approved organic sprays)—\$1,500
- Chadwick Garden irrigation system repairs—\$2,000
- Chadwick Garden deer fence, gate, and retaining wall repairs—\$3,500
- Chadwick Garden greenhouse repairs—\$1,500
- Farm Garden hoophouse construction—\$1,700
- Tractor/implement storage—\$2,000
- Chadwick main irrigation line tie in and repair—\$40,000

Some Favorite Peppers for Next Summer's Garden

It's not too early to start thinking about next summer's pepper crop. Because pepper seedlings are very slow to develop, it's important to start seeds 10–12 weeks prior to your target transplanting date. Using varieties appropriate to your area and setting out a large transplant when daily soil temperatures are 60° F at 4"–6" soil depth at mid day are keys to success in cool season and short growing season areas.

Here are some pepper propagation tips and varietal recommendations from Chadwick Garden manager Orin Martin.

Seeds, Seedling Care, and Transplanting

Pepper seeds are viable for one to two years, with viability falling off approximately 50% in the third year (viability refers to time to emergence and healthy, stocky seedling growth, as well as to the percent of seeds germinating). Both seeds and seedlings are prone to "damping off" fungus organisms, which flourish under cool soil/air temperatures, with poor air circulation and inadequate soil drainage.

Germination is optimal (10–14 days) at soil temperatures of 70°–85° F. At 60°–70° F, time to emergence is 21–28 days. At less than 60° F, percentage of germination and resultant seedling growth will be inadequate.

Hardening off pepper seedlings is important. Slowly (over 10–21 days) weaning seedlings off the plush conditions of a greenhouse, and gradually acclimating them to "real world" garden conditions fosters a buildup of carbohydrate reserves that can be used to produce new feeding root tips to aid in minimizing transplant shock. Hardening off also thickens and toughens the cuticle layer of stem and leaf cells, making them more resistant to wind damage and transpiration losses.

Peppers are adventitious rooters. If one to three leaves are pruned off and the plants transplanted deeply, roots will arise from the buried nodes, fostering better anchorage and greater root mass for foraging.

Some Recommended Varieties

Gypsy or Gypsy Bell. Actually a "wannabe" bell—it's oblong, pointed and generally only 3 lobed (most bells are 4 lobed). Hands down the earliest maturing bell type for the Santa Cruz area. Fruits are tapered to 6–7" long. Fruit color goes from lime green, canary yellow to orange and then light red. Fruit quality and taste are passable/acceptable at the orange stage, but it's worth waiting for red. Sweet enough at full maturation. (There are both bigger and sweeter bells.)

Where Gypsy really shines is when roasted, skinned, and used fresh or processed (frozen, canned). The skin peels off with ease, almost like unzipping and peeling off a jacket. While good raw or sautéed, the flesh softens and the sugar jumps way up when roasted or fried in a little olive oil. Also good stuffed and baked. Gypsy is a tall, disease-free (both foliage and fruit) plant, and a heavy

producer, generating double digit quality fruit per plant. It comes on early, produces over a long period and often goes on and on into December, even early January.

Carmen. Second only to Gypsy for a large sweet pepper. A serious improvement on the classic 'Corno di Toro' (Bull Horn) Italian heirloom. Carmen is a compact (24") plant, producing bull-horn-shaped fruit 6–9" long, and deep carmine-red. Sweet fruit, good raw, sautéed and roasted (although skins are a little thin). It comes on early, produces heavily, but quits all at once in September–October.

Marconi (Red and Yellow – Dulce). Prized Italian heirloom. Distinct from Giant Marconi hybrid, which is good as well. Tall narrow plant, comes on mid-season, lasts into December. Extremely large, fat, thick meaty walls, sweet Bull Horn-like pepper (3 lobed). The yellow form is exquisitely beautiful. Good fresh, roasted, stuffed and baked. Good productivity, moderate disease resistance (anthracnose and mildew).

Cyklon, a.k.a "the Polish Pistol," tapered and slightly curved, 3–4" red bullets. On a heat scale of 1–5, it's a strong 4. Great fresh, diced, sautéed in scrambles and stir-fries and fresh salsas. But where it really shines is when smoked or dried: the color of smoked Cyklons goes to a rich mahogany-red that is striking. It is a leading variety in the Polish spice industry for its ease of drying. To wit, I once left 4 or 5 Cyklons on the front seat of my car buried 'neath some no doubt time-dated, administrative missive I'd succeeded in ignoring, only to discover the peppers had dried perfectly in 5–7 days. Short (15–18"), erect plant that lives up to the adage(s), the smaller the shoulders of the fruit, the higher the heat index, and the smaller the fruit size, the higher the number of fruit (30–40).

Georgia Flame (from the Republic of, not the (peach) state of). Tall (24–30"), erect plants bear 2" x 6" fiery (in both color and taste—a 4 on a 1–5 scale) red fruit produced in abundance (20–30/plant). Thick, crunchy fruit walls; use as Cyklon.

Gourmet. Arguably the "best" yellow, golden-orange bell for our area, or any cool, short-season area. Short stocky plant with good leaf cover to minimize sunburn on fruit. Sets a moderate (10–15) number of fair sized 4" x 4" square, blocky bells. Like most yellow, gold, orange varieties, Gourmet just has more sugar in its genetics, so the fruit walls are thick, "meaty," both crisp and succulent (low internal fiber strips) and sweet! It's really worth letting the fruit get additional "hang time" on the plant to color up and then some. Remember, when growing for yourself, you're "chasing flavor"; only the best varieties, grown well and picked at perfection. Otherwise you might as well hit Safeway (etc.).

El Jefe. As for Jalapeño types: you've grown the rest, now grow the best—El Jefe. Often, the issue with Jalapeños is size and sizzle vs. time to maturation. With early varieties like Early Jalapeño, you get so-so flavor, bite

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Catching Up at EcoFarm

The annual Ecological Farming Conference at Asilomar in Pacific Grove is a great place to catch up with graduates of the Apprenticeship program and find out what they're doing with their training. Here are a few updates from some of the many graduates attending this year's conference –

Laura Ridenour (1995) is the new Food and Farming Program Manager for Sustainable Connections in Bellingham, Washington (sustainableconnections.org). Says Laura, "I manage the Food & Farming Program, supporting and building a vibrant and sustainable local food system in Northwest Washington by promotions of local food and farming businesses, trade meetings and educational events, business training and farmer mentorship to new farmers, and sustainable business practices. We are just about to launch a community wide challenge to grow the local and direct food dollar from the current 2% to 10%."

Kevin McInnis (1997) is in his 11th year of running Quetzal Farm (quetzalfarm.com) in Santa Rosa, California. Soon after graduating, Kevin started the 7-acre farm, which originally produced for farmers' market sales in Berkeley and Sonoma County. The farm has since expanded to include 10 acres in Occidental, planted to over 300 apple trees with additional room for vegetables.

Dave Shaw (2005–2006) is teaching gardening courses through Kresge and Oakes Colleges at UCSC, along with his work with the Live Oak Grange.

Kim Allen (2005–2006) is the Garden Program Manager for Berkeley Youth Alternatives (BYA). BYA's youth training gardens train and employ young people from high-risk neighborhoods. You can learn more about the program at www.byaonline.org.

Marsha Habib (2008–2009) and **Annie Thomas** (2009) are working at Santa Clara University in a gardening program coordinated by **Patrick Archie** (1994), who teaches in the Environmental Studies department. They're developing a new campus garden as well as helping with community gardens in the region.

Matt McCue (2005) and former UCSC intern Lily Schneider are running Shooting Star Farm in Suisun Valley, California, just north of San Francisco. The farm markets through a CSA and local farmers' markets. Read more at shootingstarcsa.blogspot.com.

Greg Kindig (2004) is running the Ant and the Grasshopper Farm in Frankfort, Michigan, growing vegetables and making honey.

Terry Allan (1992) is working for Seeds of Change after returning from India, where she helped establish an organic herb garden in Bhopal. You can read more about her work in India at www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue_70/new-faces.aspx.

Rebekah Doyle (2007) is currently an Agroecology Instructor at Prescott College in Prescott, Arizona. Says Rebekah, "It is exciting to be working with Professor **Tim Crews** (1981) and engaging with students in the campus gardens to explore a more durable agriculture for the Southwest. Like many communities, Prescott is experiencing a surge of interest in smaller scale food production and there are numerous opportunities to participate in the local food system. The apple orchards of Sedona and the citrus and date groves near Phoenix make Prescott especially suitable for locavoring."

Melissa Morris (2008–2009) just accepted at job at Project EAT (Educate, Act, Thrive; www.projecteat.com) in Hayward, California, where she'll be working with high school students on an educational farm. According to their website, Project EAT's mission is "... to inspire a behavioral shift towards health and wellness. With schools as our center, hands-on learning as our tool, and collaboration as our catalyst, we will empower our communities to embrace a healthy and sustainable future."

Daniel Paduano (2006) and Nancy Haug Paduano started Abounding Harvest Mountain Farm (www.aboundingharvest.com) in the Santa Cruz Mountains, specializing in fruit and summer vegetables. Daniel also serves on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Farm & Garden, as well as maintaining the CASFS blog, casfs.blogspot.com.

Paul Richeson, Miranda Roberts, and Brian Coltrin (all 2008 grads) recently started Fat Cabbage Farm in Pescadero, California, joining Fifth Crow Farm (**John Vars, Teresa Kurtak, and Mike Irving**), Blue House Farm (**Ned Conwell and Ryan Casey**), and Pie Ranch (**Jered Lawson and Nancy Vail**) in this coastal San Mateo County hub of farms started by Apprenticeship alumni. Read about them at miranda.ujeni.net/blog (Fat Cabbage), www.5thcrowfarm.com, bluehouseorganicfarm.com, and www.pieranch.org

Julia Dashe (2003) is a garden educator at the Seeds at City Urban Farm in San Diego, working with San Diego State University students. She also works with the San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project and the Seeds of Leadership Youth Garden Program, which she founded at Morse High School.

Ken Foster (1985) owns Terra Nova Ecological Landscaping in Santa Cruz (www.terranovalandscaping.com) and serves on the planning committee of the Ecological Farming Association for the EcoFarm Conference.

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Russet Apples (from page 2)

the Golden Delicious in its parentage. Size-wise, it rivals Golden. Thinning to 6-8" between apples jumps the size. The coloring is green-yellow, turning to a soft gold at full maturation. It has some light russeting in the stem basket area, and pronounced lenticel dotting. The skin is a bit tough and chewy. The flesh is both green and yellow.

Where this apple excels is in the boldness and complexity of the tasting experience. With the first bite you become aware that you're on to something strong, long and definitive. Initially the breaking, crisp, coarse flesh is palpable, then comes a strong bite of acidity coupled with and then extended by big sugar.

St. Edmund's Pippin (a.k.a St. Edmunds Russet, England, 1875). About the earliest ripening of russets. It is usually on the last week of August to mid-September, which rivals Fall Russet for early cropping. An annual and heavy cropper. The fruit is medium sized, flat-round and wider than tall. The skin color is uniformly golden-fawn russeted. The flesh is a pale creamy yellow, crisp, juicy, fine textured and dense. The taste runs to pear, even pear nectar, rich, sugary, subacid and aromatic. An impressive apple.

Hoople's Antique Gold. A meritorious apple from Mr. Harry Hoople of Hoople's Fruit Farm in Otway, Ohio. A weak scion and small apple with a big taste. Probably a bud mutation of Golden Delicious. In shape, Hoople's resembles its alleged parent. The Antique refers not to its age, but the beauty and richness of its antique gold skin color. The flesh is coarse textured and chunky. The taste is almost as sugary as Hudson's Golden Gem. Sweetness is the major chord with crispness and acidity as the minor chord.

Russets—make their acquaintance, and it'll be (as the female junior high crowd intones) BFF: best friends forever.

Mail Order Sources

Although it is difficult to source trees of many of the finer russeted varieties, some sources include:

- Dave Wilson Nursery: American Golden Russet, Ashmead's Kernel, Hudson's Golden Gem
- Raintree Nursery: Ashmead's Kernel, Egremont Russet, Hudson's Golden Gem
- Rocky Meadow Nursery: Gold Russet, Razor Russet, Russet Beauty
- Southmeadow Fruit Gardens: Ashmead's Kernel, English Golden Russet, Fall Russet, Hoople's Antique Gold, Pitmaston Pineapple, Wheeler's Golden Russet, Zaubergau Reinette
- Trees of Antiquity: American Golden Russet, Ashmead's Kernel, Hudson's Golden Gem, Pitmaston Pineapple, Ribston Pippin, St. Edmund's Pippin

Pepper Varieties (from p. 6)

meshed with minimal size and variable coloring. (Remember a mature Jalapeño is all red with some stretch marks or cracking.) El Jefe, however, tends to smooth skin even at full maturity. High yielding, good size, full flavor, with all the Jalapeño bite and way earlier than the previous best Jalapeño – Biker Billy (Burpee).

Read more about growing peppers and pepper varieties in our "For the Gardener" series, online at casfs.ucsc.edu/publications/gardenideas/index.html