

McIntosh News



Green Mountain Orchards, Putney, Vermont

**Meet
Steven Reviczky**
page 2

Web goes wild

page 4

Galette de Pommes au Calvados (Apple and Calvados Tart)

page 6



Douglas Orchards, West Shoreham, Vermont

photos by Bar Weeks



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Connecticut's Reviczky focuses on preservation, jobs

By BAR WEEKS

Five minutes into our conversation with Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture Steven K. Reviczky, it was clear that he not only has a deep respect for Connecticut's agricultural heritage, but he also has a firm grasp on Connecticut's agricultural future.

As a young boy, Reviczky picked apples from the dozen or so trees on his grandparents' dairy farm. He fondly recalls visiting Buell's Apple Orchard on Crystal Pond Road in Eastford, and Dick and Elaine Crooke's orchard in Ashton, home of the first Supermac.

His other set of grandparents operated a chicken farm, and one of his first jobs was packing eggs at an Ashford egg farm.

In 1985, while attending the University of Connecticut, Reviczky was elected first selectman in Ashford. He later earned a bachelor of arts degree in public policy and government from Eastern Connecticut State University.

Reviczky served as a property agent for Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program for nine years. For the five years leading up to his 2011 appointment to Commissioner of Agriculture by Governor Dannel Malloy, Reviczky was executive director of the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association.

In 2005, the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 228, the Community Investment Act, which created another source of funding for the Farmland Preservation Program, the first farmland protection program in the country. Each municipality collects a fee for every land record document filed. A small portion is kept for town improvements



Bar Weeks

Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture Steven K. Reviczky

and record management. The remainder of that fee is divided among four state agencies, two being agricultural viability and farmland preservation.

The Community Investment Act also provides money for two Agriculture Viability grant programs. One is the Farm Viability Program that helps farmers, nonprofit organizations, and towns to develop new ways to market their products and give assistance in constructing buildings associated with selling their products. The increase in the number of Connecticut's farmers' markets is a prime example of how this grant money has been used. In Connecticut,

there are now about 100 farmers' markets across the state, from Maple Bank Farm in Roxbury to Woodstock Orchards in the northeastern part of the state.

The second Agriculture Viability grants program is the Farm Transition Program, a dollar-for-dollar matching program that supports projects that include the expansion of farm production, and adding new products and practices that will increase profits.

The Farm Reinvestment Grants Program also supports expansion projects, but the farm must have a life expectancy of 20 years or more.

This February, the State Bond Commission approved \$5,000,000 for the Department of Agriculture's new Farmland Restoration Program, a matching program with a focus on returning and increasing farmland to production in the state. As many as 250 farms could benefit from this program.

Reviczky's commitment to farmland preservation is closely tied to his commitment to creating jobs for Connecticut agriculture. As he explains, an increase in production at a farm means more sales at the farm, more deliveries of services to that farm, and so on.

Looking to the future, Reviczky spoke of the Governor's Council for Agricultural Development, a body of 15 producers that represent Connecticut agriculture. Their mission: to increase consumer spending on locally grown food from its current 1 percent to 5 percent by 2020. If successful, says Reviczky, this will strengthen the state's agricultural economy and create more jobs for Connecticut agriculture.

Soares resigns

Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture Scott Soares announced this week that he is stepping down in May to become executive director of the Cranberry Marketing Committee. He has worked with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural resources for 17 years, the last several as commissioner.

Gov. Deval Patrick has named Greg Watson, a former commissioner of agriculture, to replace Soares.

YouTube videos at work

The New England Apple Association's 14 short video programs were viewed collectively more than 117 times daily during March. Leading the way are the programs on planning for pick-your-own, with more than 14,500 views since its release in August 2009, and the two-part series on pruning, with more than 11,500 views in just two years since being uploaded March 31, 2010.

All the videos are featured on the New England Apple Association website as well as YouTube, and they are often included in the association weblog, newenglandorchards.org.

The programs are:

[New England pick-your-own orchards](#)

The series on apple pie-making features Andrea Darrow of Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, Vermont.

[Apple pie, part 1: preparing the filling](#)

[Apple pie, part 2: making a perfect crust](#)

[Apple pie, part 3: from crust to oven](#)

The series on New England apple varieties features Chuck and Diane Souther of Apple Hill Farm in Concord, New Hampshire.

[New England apples: McIntosh and other classics](#)

[New England apples: old and new](#)

[New England apples: flavors for every meal](#)

The programs on pruning and grafting feature Mo and Andre Tougas of Tougas Family Farm in Northborough, Massachusetts.

[New England apples: pruning the trees, part 1](#)

[New England apples: pruning the trees, part 2](#)

[Grafting New England apple trees](#)

The programs on pollination and cider-making feature Frank Carlson of Carlson Orchards in Harvard, Massachusetts.

[Pollination in New England apple orchards](#)

[Cider making in New England](#)

[Proper storage of New England apples](#)

The program on the packing house features Ned O'Neill of J. P. Sullivan in Ayer, Massachusetts, with additional footage from Sunrise Orchards in Cornwall, Vermont.

[Packing New England apples](#)

The videos were produced from 2009 to 2011 with funding from the Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont departments of agriculture, and a Northeast Farm Credit AgEnhancement grant. The association currently is seeking funds to add to the series in 2012.



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Web activity soars

Hits up 76 percent for first quarter of 2012

Maybe it's the 2012 New England Apples wall calendar. Or the [weblog](#). Or the brochure or recipe cards, or this newsletter. They all publicize the New England Apple Association website address, newenglandapples.org. Maybe it is the behind-the-scenes work on Search Engine Optimization.

Most likely, it is a combination of all these factors. But whatever is driving it, activity on the association website for the first three months of the year has been off the charts. This comes on the heels of a 17 percent increase in hits from 2010 to 2011, from 652,725 to 763,743. From January 1 to March 31, 2012, hits to the website are up a whopping 76 percent, from 96,744 a year ago to 170,462.

Keep in mind that this is typically a slow time of year (for comparison, the harvest months of September and October each attracted more than 170,000 hits in 2011). Still, it is a significant trend, and these are beginning to be serious numbers.

Not to be overlooked, of course, are changes to the content of the site. There are now photographs and descriptions of more than 120 apple varieties on the site, with more on the way, and the descriptions are continually being updated.

The improvements to the site's SEO were funded in part with a 2011 Specialty Crops grant from Vermont, which also funded a major overhaul of the site's education section. The new [Cider and](#)

[Pies](#) section is expected to boost activity in the current year, and other changes are in the works.

"The website is never really done," says Executive Director Bar Weeks. "We need to continually strengthen its existing features and add new ones to stay current and relevant."

Here are the numbers of hits for the year so far:

	2011	2012
January	31,664	42,623
February	32,213	59,322
March	32,867	68,517
TOTAL	96,744	170,462

Check out our 'Cider and Pies'

We've added a new section to our website, newenglandapples.org, to showcase the region's cider makers and producers of value-added apple products. In addition to a main [Cider and Pies](#) page, there is a page of [cider apples](#) that particularly excel when pressed into juice. Both pages are listed in the left-hand navigation of the website's home page.

The Cider and Pies page includes information about cider, a video program about cider-making, and resources for people interested in making their own apple drinks. We'll be adding to the pages throughout the year.

Is your listing up to date?

With all this activity on the website, it is more important than ever that your orchard or business listing is accurate and up to date. Visitors to the site can find you on your state's listing page, by zip code or using Google Maps, and also by the apple varieties you grow and the other products you sell.

If you are already a member and need help logging on or editing your listing, or if you would like to be added to the site, please contact info@newenglandapples.org, or call 203-891-5715.

Galette [gah-LET] de Pommes au Calvados (Apple and Calvados Tart)

By BAR WEEKS

I'VE WAITED WITH ANTICIPATION FOR THIS RECIPE. The Darrow family of Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, Vermont, offered it a few summers back, but we were all on vacation, and of course the recipe was back at their home. One of the Darrow girls first told me about it, and I was immediately interested. Not only did the name of the dessert, *galette*, intrigue me; the fact that it was one of her grandmother's favorite apple recipes fascinated me even more.

Her grandmother had saved out the recipe from *Gourmet* magazine some years earlier, had baked and shared it many times, as have the Darrows. It is not to be confused with a European variation, *Galette des Rois* (King Cake), which has a bean baked into it. Whoever is served the piece with the bean is the lucky king for the day. This galette requires no bean to make you feel like royalty.

How is it I had never come across a galette before? Galette is French, and I studied French in high school and college; I even studied French at the University of Caen, in Normandy, on a semester abroad program, and I had never heard of a galette.

After a little looking, I found its translation is actually "tart." Epicurious further defines it in this way: "A variety of tarts, both savory and sweet, with as many variations as there are French regions. The tart may be filled with fruit, jam, nuts, meat, or cheese."

I felt foolish — I'd eaten many a galette in Caen without knowing what it was! The pâtisseries offer quite a variety of single-serving tarts, of which I'd consumed many on my way home from school.

But maybe none of those were quite as delectable



as one made from orchard-fresh apples. There is a good reason for that—galettes rely on the filling rather than extra sweetener or heavy spice for their *sauveur*. The apple flavor is allowed to dominate.

One good choice of apple for this recipe is Idared, a fairly unremarkable apple when first picked in October. It requires some cold storage time to develop its complexities, and by this time of year, it is superb both in flavor and texture. If I haven't convinced you yet, may I add Idareds also keep their shape when cooked!

Whichever New England apple you choose, you really can't go wrong. But to give the galette its *je ne sais quoi*, the warmth and flavor of Normandy, France, a couple of splashes of Calvados (the finest apple brandy) is added to both the applesauce base and the whipped cream topping.

Oh, and this is very important: it's better if it's all eaten the day it's baked—piece of cake.

Galette de Pommes au Calvados (Apple and Calvados Tart)

Serves 8

All-butter pastry dough

Makes a 12-inch single-crust galette (or a 9-inch double-crust pie)

2-1/2 c flour

2 t sugar

1/2 t salt

1 c (2 sticks) butter, cut into 1/2" cubes

9-12 T ice water

In a medium bowl, mix together flour, sugar, and salt. Blend in butter with a pastry blender until most of mixture resembles coarse meal with small butter lumps. Drizzle evenly with 9 tablespoons ice water, gently stirring with a fork. Squeeze the dough to test if it holds together. If it does not hold together, add 1 tablespoon ice water at a time until it does. Caution: Pastry will be tough if you overwork it.

Turn out dough onto a floured board and divide into 8 parts. Using heel of your hand, push each part once or twice in a forward motion to help distribute fat. Gather dough together and press into a ball, then flatten into a 6-inch disk. Wrap in plastic wrap, and chill until firm, at least 1 hour.

Filling

5 medium Idareds or other New England apples

2 t fresh lemon juice

1/3 c sugar

Calvados applesauce (recipe follows)

3 T butter, cut into 1/2" pieces

1-1/2 t sugar

Roll out pastry to a 16-inch round, 1/8-inch thick. Transfer to large parchment-lined baking sheet. Fold in edge of pastry to fit on baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap, and chill 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

While pastry is chilling, peel, core, and thinly slice the apples. Toss slices with lemon juice and 1/3 cup sugar.

Keep chilled pastry on parchment, remove plastic wrap, and unfold any edges so pastry is flat. Leaving a 2-inch border, spread cooled Calvados applesauce

over pastry, and top with sliced apples, mounding slightly. Fold edges of pastry partially over filling, pleating dough as necessary. Dot apples with butter. Lightly brush pastry edge with water and sprinkle the edge with the 1-1/2 teaspoons sugar. Bake galette 40 minutes, or until pastry is golden and apples are tender.

Calvados Applesauce

Makes about 1-1/4 cups

3 medium New England apples

1/2 c cider or water

1/8 – 1/4 c sugar, depending on tartness of apples

1/2 t grated lemon zest

1/4 t cinnamon

2 T Calvados

Peel and core apples, then cut into 1-inch pieces. In a 2-quart saucepan, bring apples, cider, sugar, zest, and cinnamon to a boil, stirring occasionally. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 15 minutes.

Uncover and simmer 5 to 10 more minutes, or until most of liquid is evaporated. Add Calvados and simmer 1 more minute. Mash apples to a coarse sauce.

Glaze

2 T apple jelly (or apple cider jelly or apple butter)

While galette is baking, melt apple jelly in a small saucepan over moderately low heat, stirring.

Slide baked galette on parchment onto a rack. Brush with glaze and let cool to room temperature.

Topping

1 c heavy cream

1 T confectioners sugar

2 T Calvados

In a medium bowl, beat together cream and confectioners sugar until cream holds soft peaks, then beat in Calvados. An easy way to cut galette into servings is to use a pizza wheel. Serve with a dollop of Calvados cream.

You can simplify the applesauce, glaze or topping if you don't have the time or ingredients. You will still be left with plenty of apple flavor.



Rogers Orchards, Southington, Connecticut

Bar Weeks



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Winter beauty

Apples are beautiful on or off the tree, in or out of season.



Wild apples on a Vermont roadside, late December

Bar Weeks

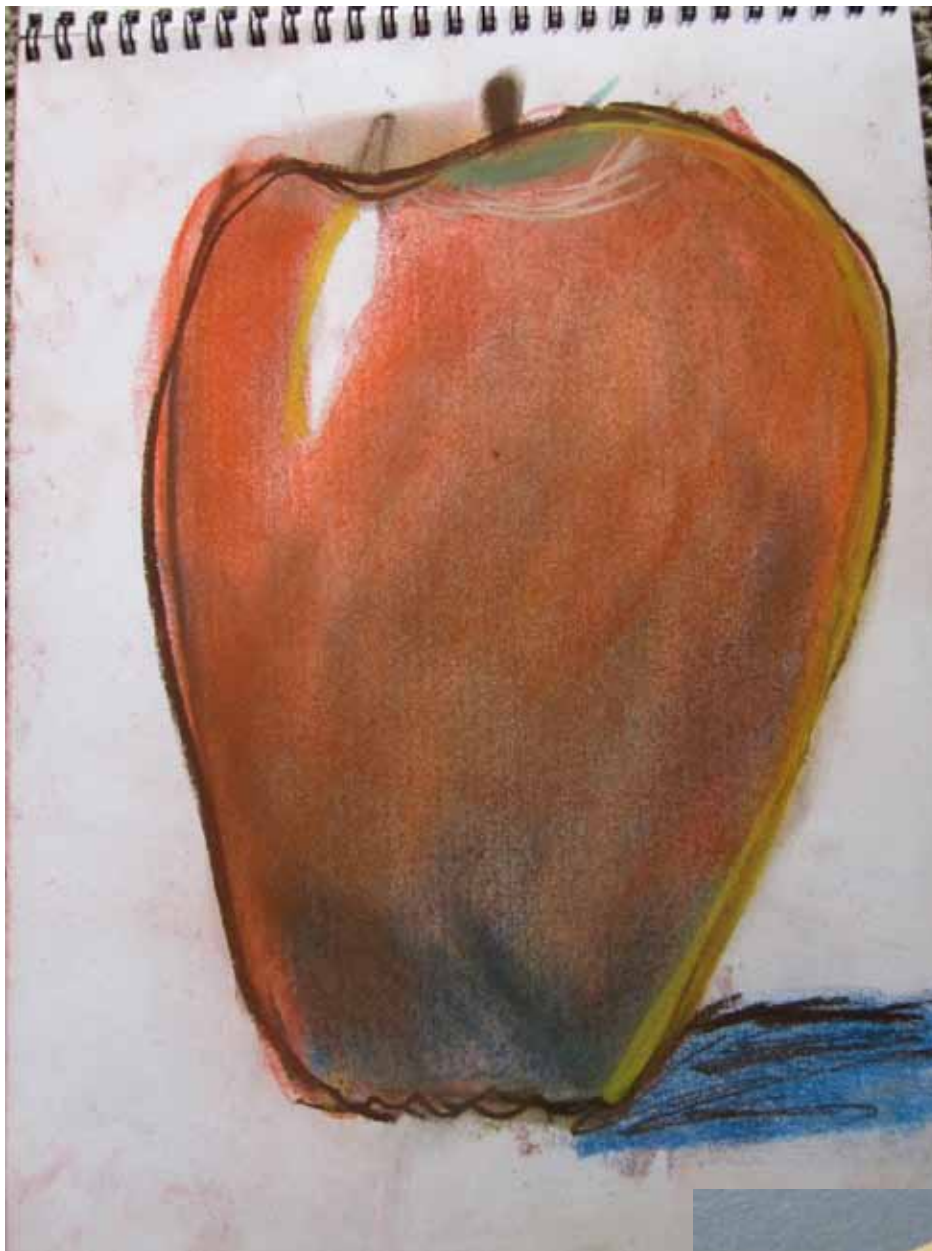
Sholan Farms, Leominster, Massachusetts

Russell Powell



Spring 2012

McIntosh News



The apple-loving Wright family supplied us with these two images. The chalk drawing is by seven-year-old Andrew Wright of Glendale, California.

Meanwhile, Andrew's grandfather, Jonathan Wright of Northampton, Massachusetts, writes of the barnacle-encrusted apple below, "It was sitting at the wash line on the north coast of Puerto Rico, in Loiza. I rinsed it off in the outside shower and put it on a slate table to photograph.

"That's the whole story right there. Imagine a skin so solid that it could support these critters sticking on and maturing!

"The apple was doing the bobbing this time...

"I think it should be called a barnapple."

Apples in new and unusual places

BEAUTIFUL THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, apples have also inspired artists for centuries, and sometimes can be found in unusual places.



Book Review

The Holistic Orchard

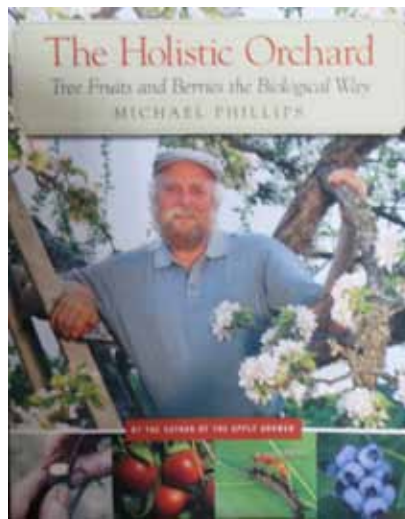
By **RUSSELL POWELL**

New on the bookshelves this spring is *The Holistic Orchard* (Chelsea Green) by Michael Phillips. Phillips, who operates Lost Nation Orchard in Groveton, New Hampshire, previously wrote *The Apple Grower* in 2005. *The Holistic Orchard* is written with the backyard gardener and small orchard in mind.

I do not grow apples, and even if I did it would take some years to properly evaluate the efficacy of Phillips' advice. But he covers a lot of ground in 400 pages, laying out his ideas about growing apples and other fruits using organic inputs and chemicals, on a small scale. The book provides detailed instructions for raising apples (plus berries and stone fruits), from choosing varieties to soil management to pests and disease.

Phillips' basic philosophy is to maximize the tree's or plant's ability to fend off disease, using preventive measures wherever possible. His methods are, as the title suggests, holistic: to strengthen the entire orchard ecosystem, building up the soil, eliminating or reducing practices like mowing, and taking steps to foster biodiversity and strengthen the immune systems of the trees.

There's nothing radical about growing healthy trees with as few chemicals as possible. Many of Phillips' recommendations, though—such as building fences around every tree to deter deer—may be more labor intensive than suits the casual gardener. For people with the time and interest, *Holistic Orchard* may serve as a valuable horticultural guide. For people who are growing apples primarily for the pleasure of eating homegrown fruit, the added work may not outweigh the risks.



The risks, of course, are that if the methods don't work, or only partially work, it could result in lost trees or crops. That's true with conventional growers, too (and "conventional" includes the nearly universal practice of integrated pest management). It's a risk that comes with almost any form of agriculture—Mother Nature, not the farmer, has the last say.

That's my only complaint with Phillips, and it is both philosophical and practical. The commercial apple growers I work with are some of

the brightest, most thoughtful people I know, and they go about their work with integrity. They, like Phillips, are making informed judgments about the best ways to grow healthy, flavorful fruit, and Phillips' frequent side rants betray a lack of understanding of, much less empathy with, his farming brethren. Perhaps Phillips does have a better way, but to imply that he has better experience or nobler aims reads like hubris.

The philosophical wanderings also detract from the main task at hand: providing a useful guide for amateur growers, so they can understand and employ his methods. The asides become repetitive; the text could have used some pruning.

Still, the book is a good resource for anyone interested in delving more into apples and apple growing. It is filled with photographs and illustrations as well, adding to its usefulness as a growing guide. The more people know about apples—and both the joys and challenges of growing them—the better for all growers.

The Holistic Orchard already has been well received in some quarters — it was one of five gardening books to receive the American Horticultural Society's 2012 Book Award.

*Coming
this summer!*

The Great American Apple



New stories of our most storied fruit

A book by Russell Steven Powell

With photography by Bar Weeks

Powell, long-time executive director of the New England Apple Association, takes readers on a tour of apple-growing in the U.S., from orchard to table to market.

The Orchard

- Inside the orchard
- Searching for heirlooms
- The real John Chapman

The Table

- Cooking with apples
- Apple drinks

The Market

- Coping with pests and disease
- Who will pick our apples?
- The race for the next Super Apple
- Apple futures

With a photographic index of more than 100 apple varieties grown in the U.S., and orchard photography by Powell and Weeks, current executive director of the New England Apple Association

Send queries to: powellr2@comcast.net

September 5 is 2012 New England Apple Day!

New England Apple Association is pleased to announce the date for the 2012 New England Apple Day: Wednesday, September 5. This New England-wide apple harvest kick-off event is planned at a critical time for apple growers.

Our Association, with the support of Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture Scott Soares, launched the event three years ago in Massachusetts. Apple Day is a great way to maximize publicity and draw attention to the fresh harvest around the time McIntosh and many other popular varieties are ready for picking.

The commissioners of agriculture in each of the New England states will visit orchards, packing-houses, or cider mills on New England Apple Day to meet with growers, producers, and media, learn about the 2012 crop, and most-importantly, enjoy a fresh-picked apple and other apple products.

Topics of discussion may be as varied as the challenges of wholesale marketing, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), or attracting families to orchards by offering outdoor activities. The scope can be as wide as each state wants it to be.

Keep your calendars clear for Wednesday, September 5, 2012!

FarmPlate launched

FarmPlate.com is an online community of farmers, fishermen, foragers, food artisans, restaurants, markets, and gourmands of every stripe, say its founders. The site features a searchable directory of more than 40,000 business listings across the country.

Users can source products and discover new sustainable food businesses, as well as rate and review their favorite food and farm enterprises. Visit FarmPlate at www.farmplate.com.