

McIntosh News

**Preparing for
the season**



Days before spring bloom, the trees are freshly pruned at Norton Bros. Fruit Farm in Cheshire, Connecticut.



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Senior Writer

McIntosh News is published quarterly by the New England Apple Association and distributed free to apple growers, agricultural organizations, and other friends of the New England apple industry. The nonprofit New England Apple Association is a grower-funded organization charged with raising awareness of apple varieties grown in New England.

For information regarding membership, editorial submissions or advertising, please contact:

New England
Apple Association

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Orchard Run

Bar Weeks, executive director

Send us your best!

PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE almost as great a craving for information about apples as for eating them. Some of the evidence is anecdotal—the increasing interest in our New England apples wall calendar, for example, or the variety of questions we entertain at events like the Big E—and some of it is quantifiable, like the remarkable growth in visits to our website over the past 15 months (see page 4). But the more information we provide, the more interest in apples is shown.

What is it people are looking for? Sometimes they want to know the history of a certain New England apple variety. Just because the stories of the McIntosh or Cortland are almost a part of a New England grower's DNA does not mean that the general public is familiar with them. We are often asked about the origin of a variety like Macoun (and how to pronounce it!) or Empire and the best way to use them.

Once they learn about heirlooms like Baldwin or Northern Spy, or newer apples like Ginger Gold, Jonagold, Shamrock, or even Honeycrisp, consumers want to know where to find them. That is where our website is extremely helpful. If you are a member orchard reading this, please be sure to update your listing with all the varieties you grow. If you are not a member, a listing on our website should be reason enough to join the Association, although it is just one of the benefits.

Before they visit an orchard, many people want to know if the farm is a pick-your-own orchard or a farm stand, or if they can buy other fruits and vegetables there. They may watch our video on how to prepare for a visit to a pick-your-own orchard, or our three-part series about apple varieties grown in the region.

It does not stop there. Ripening dates are of great interest to both consumer and grower. Then there are the horticultural questions: how are apples grown? Why is pollination important? What is the science behind grafting? Our web-

Annual meeting June 11

The annual meeting of the New England Apple Association will be Tuesday, June 11, at 10 a.m. at J. P. Sullivan & Co., 50 Barnum Rd., Ayer, Massachusetts. All member orchards are invited to attend.

Please send agenda items to info@newenglandapples.org, or call 203-439-7006.

site and our educational videos on YouTube discuss these and many other topics.

But far and away the most questions we encounter have to do with the best ways to enjoy apples. These include topics like nutritional information, how to store apples, and special characteristics of each variety, but most of the inquiries around food reflect an insatiable appetite for new and interesting recipes.

For that reason, we are about to embark on an ambitious project to remake the recipe section on our website, with new recipes and improved layout and design, including photographs. We have added a number of recipes in recent years and posted many of them on our weblog, newenglandorchards.org, and we have many more in the pipeline for the 2013 season. But we are always in need of more! If you have an apple recipe you would like to share, send it to us at info@newenglandapples.org, or mail it to PO Box 41, Hatfield, MA 01038.

If your recipe makes it to either our website, the weblog, this newsletter, or a Big E recipe card, we will include a credit line to your orchard. It is another way we connect consumers to your orchard while satisfying their growing demand for New England apples.



Apple wood gathered from pruning, shown here at Norton Bros. Fruit Farm, makes great firewood.

Bar Weeks photo

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Website activity continues to soar

The New England Apple Association website, newenglandapples.org, kept up the pace in the first quarter of 2013 following a record-setting year in 2012. Visitors to the site in January, February, and March totaled 10,577, a 59 percent increase over a year ago. The increase in hits was even more dramatic, up 75 percent, to 297,975.

The first six months of the calendar year historically are the slowest for visits to the website, so the increases to more than 3,000 visitors and nearly 100,000 hits per month bodes well for the rest of the year. In 2012, the site attracted more than

39,000 visitors (up 44 percent from 2011) accounting for nearly 1.4 million hits (an 83 percent increase).

Nearly 12,000 view videos

The Association's series of 14 short video programs, on YouTube as well as the website, had 11,894 views during the first quarter of 2013, or about 130 per day. The programs receiving the most views this winter were a two-part series on pruning, with more than 7,500 views, grafting (1,958), and apple pie-making (three-part series, 1,446).

newenglandapples.org first-quarter usage history

Hits

	2009	2010	increase	2011	increase	2012	increase	2013	increase
January	16,225	22,670	40%	31,664	40%	42,623	35%	101,629	138%
February	27,732	28,870	4%	32,213	12%	59,322	84%	96,038	62%
March	34,771	44,008	26%	32,867	-25%	68,517	108%	100,308	46%
First quarter	78,728	95,548	21%	96,744	1%	170,462	76%	297,975	75%

Visitors

	2009	2010	increase	2011	increase	2012	increase	2013	increase
January	1,362	1,612	18%	1,597	-1%	2,059	29%	3,618	76%
February	3,075	1,399	-46%	1,320	-6%	2,243	70%	3,214	43%
March	3,389	2,078	-61%	1,437	-31%	2,349	63%	3,745	59%
First quarter	7,826	5,089	-54%	4,354	-14%	6,651	53%	10,577	59%

Powell to write second apple book

Senior Writer Russell Powell has signed on with [The Countryman Press](http://TheCountrymanPress.com) to write a second book about apples. Powell published his first book, [America's Apple](http://America'sApple.com), in September.

Tentatively titled *A Field Guide to New England Apples*, the new book will be modeled on an Audubon guide, with individual pages for 150 apple varieties grown or sold in New England. The guide will be ideal for visitors to orchard, farm stand, or grocery store, with comments on flavor, appearance, and

texture, best uses, special characteristics, availability, ripening times, and storage qualities. The apple descriptions will be introduced by a history of apple growing in New England, and basic horticulture. Bar Lois Weeks, who took photographs for *America's Apple*, will take photographs for this book as well.

The new *Field Guide* will be published during the summer of 2014.

Vermont's oldest name in publishing, The Country-

man Press began in Taftsville, Vermont, in 1973, and in 1996 became a division of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. The Countryman Press retains editorial and production offices in Woodstock, Vermont.

Powell gave a talk on “Early Apple Growing in New England” at the [Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary](#) in Wales, Massachusetts, April 20, and he will present at the Southbridge, Massachusetts, Historical Society Wednesday, May 8, at 7 p.m. On Thursday, May 23, at 7 p.m., he will speak about “Separating Fact from

Fiction in John Chapman, aka Johnny Appleseed,” at the [Maine Historical Society](#) in Portland.

America’s Apple, a comprehensive look at apple growing in the United States, can be purchased either in hardcover or ebook at select orchards and independent bookstores or online at [amazon.com](#), [barnesandnoble.com](#), or [silverstreetmedia.com](#).

For information about retail discounts, write to americasapple@comcast.net.

Spreading the word about New England Apples

Executive Director Bar Weeks and Senior Writer Russell Powell represented the New England Apple Association at several late winter apple events around the region:

Weeks and Powell attended the **International Tree Fruit Association** annual meeting in Boston February 27. At the conference they met with apple breeder Susan K. Brown and licensing associate Jessica Lyga of Cornell University and Deishin Lee, a professor at Harvard Business School, to discuss the Association’s project to bring new managed apple varieties to New England. The project is funded with Specialty Crops funds from Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Weeks and Powell also met with Nancy Foster, president of the U. S. Apple Association.

Ten apple growers from New England, New Jersey, and New York under age 35 were able to attend the IFTA conference with scholarships from the Association funded by a grant from Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement.

Weeks and Powell helped staff a booth at the **AAA Travel Marketplace** at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, March 1. They gave out apples and 2013 New England Apples calendars



as they discussed apples and orchards with visitors to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources booth during the opening day of the 10th annual event, which drew visitors from around New England.

Powell talked about the future of the New England apple industry, with an emphasis on the wholesale market, at the **Vermont Apple Summit** in Montpelier March 7. Apple growers, public officials, and representatives of food and agricultural groups around the state attended the meeting. Governor Peter Shumlin addressed the meeting, as did Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Ross.

Above: Bar Weeks and Russell Powell talk apples at the AAA Travel Marketplace.

Remembering Gordon Drazen and Robert McDougal

The New England apple industry lost two long-time growers this winter with the passing of Gordon Drazen, 89, of Drazen Orchards in Cheshire, Connecticut, December 7, and Robert H. McDougal, 88, of McDougal Orchards in Springvale, Maine, December 9.

After serving in the Navy, McDougal returned in 1953 to manage the family orchard in partnership with his father and brother-in-law, Clifford Davis. Eventually McDougal became sole proprietor.

He received the Maine State Pomological Society's Outstanding Service Award in 1977, and he was a former member of the board of directors of the New York-New England Apple Institute, the forerunner of the New England Apple Association.

McDougal's daughter, Ellen McAdam, who now manages the farm, currently serves on the Association board. McDougal's niece, Marilyn Meyerhans, is also an apple grower in Maine with Lakeside Orchards in Manchester and The Apple Farm in Fairfield.

Robert McDougal introduced pick-your-own orchards to Southern Maine in 1974, after a hailstorm decimated his wholesale crop. He was among the first growers in Maine to switch to dwarfing rootstocks.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Priscilla (Pat) B. McDougal; his daughter, Ellen McAdam, her husband, Jack, of Springvale; his son, Evan R. McDougal, his wife, Betsy, of Manchester, New Hampshire;



Gordon Drazen's son Eli and daughter Lisa continue to run Drazen Orchards.

his son, Glenn D. McDougal; and his son, Gene McDougal, his wife Triccia, nine grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Gordon Drazen spent the early part of his first career as a civil engineer and project manager. He began his second career as an orchardist in 1982, renewing the plantings at the orchard established by his father, David Drazen, in 1951.

During his tenure, Gordon expanded and updated the farm to include more than 4,000 trees and a new farm stand. He was an early practitioner of integrated pest management. He is survived by daughter Lisa Drazen and son-in-law Kevin Meehan, son Eli Drazen, and daughter-in-law Won Hee Lee, all of Cheshire.

Eli and Lisa Drazen are now managing the orchard, meaning that Cheshire still has four commercial apple orchards, with Hickory Hill Orchards and Norton Bros. Fruit Farm. A fourth, Bishop Farm, has greatly reduced its plantings, but another Bishop, Jim, is now growing apples on adjacent land as Colton's Corner Orchard.

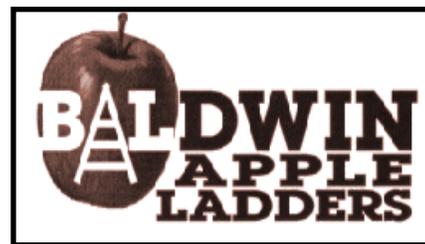


Hickory Hill Orchards, one of four commercial apple growers in Cheshire, Connecticut



Jim Bishop, left, owner of Colton's Corner Orchard in Cheshire, Connecticut, prunes some old trees with the help of Dennis Panasci of Waterbury.

Bar Weeks photos



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America's Apple



Russell Steven Powell
With photographs by Bar Lois Weeks

“*America’s Apple* is a thorough and informative tour of the landscape of American apples in the 21st century and a sympathetic portrait of the intrepid New England farmers who grow them.”

— Hannah Nordhaus, author of *The Beekeeper’s Lament*

“If you love apples (and who doesn’t?), this book will interest you. It’s a colorful story about the culture of apples, sweet with plenty of juicy details, a crisp prose style and tart observations.”

—The Moosewood Collective, owners of Moosewood Restaurant, celebrating 40 years of operation in Ithaca, New York, and authors of 13 natural foods cookbooks

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and a photographic index of 120 apple varieties grown in the United States**

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