

McIntosh News

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E

EDITION!





The Seal of Good Taste

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McIntosh News is published by the New England Apple Association and distributed free to apple growers, policymakers, 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.

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THE NEW ENGLAND APPLE ASSOCIATION took a huge step forward this fall with an expanded presence at the Eastern States Exposition (“The Big E”). After several moves within the Massachusetts State Building over the past decade, the Association hopes to have found a permanent home in a space that has more working room, double the counter space, and additional light and exposure compared to its previous location.

Activity and sales at the apple booth have grown every year since the Association had its first booth in 2003, and they reached an all-time high in 2012 when a last-minute cancellation by a neighboring vendor enabled the Association to double its space at its former site. We more than doubled our business that year, and no longer had to precariously balance baking sheets of hot apple pies on a footstool, or cram in apple displays on crowded counters, or constantly get in each other’s way.

That year confirmed our need for additional space, and others concurred, leading to this fall’s expansion. The new booth is in the back of the center bay of the Massachusetts Building, much of which is occupied by state agencies doing outreach such as the Office of Travel and Tourism. The apple booth is roughly square and has two long counters, one of which abuts double doors opening to a widely-used picnic area at the back of the building.

We have no immediate neighbors. The back wall leads to the picnic area; behind another partial wall is the Massachusetts Dairy Association. Across wide corridors on the two sides with counters, the Massachusetts Grange sells lobster rolls and clam chowder, and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources hands out literature.

The new space has great potential, but it required significant renovations. There were major costs for new plumbing and electricity associated with the move. We were required to install a three-bay sink and a separate hand-washing sink to bring the booth up to Massachusetts code. The electrical work included fitting our commercial oven with a 60-amp receptacle.

Moving the heavy, bulky convection oven from old space to new took four people. The rest — freezer, refrigerator, cider fountains, microwave, and the like — we moved ourselves.

We had an existing shed demolished, painted the brick wall behind oven and sinks, and purchased existing counters from the previous tenant.



Much of the work was accomplished with volunteers. **Ned O'Neill**, chair of the Association's board of directors, traveled to the Massachusetts building in April to meet with Executive Director **Bar Lois Weeks**, Senior Writer **Russell Steven Powell**, and **Mary Jordan** and **Howard Vinton** of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources to discuss the move, and the full board held its June meeting in the building to evaluate the new space.

Jonathan Wright, president of Wright Builders in Northampton, took time out of his schedule to advise us on the layout for the new space. **Noel Kurtz** of Hadley built a custom-sized counter as a barrier between the oven and fairgoers just days before the fair opened when we discovered that the existing one was too wide for the space.

EVEN WITH all these advantages, it took us a few days to learn how to best use the new space, establish traffic patterns, and experiment with the longer counter displays. Some fairgoers did not find our new location. Still, we increased revenue significantly from 2013 (enough, thankfully, to cover the renovations), and nearly matched our sales from two years ago, while laying the groundwork for significantly increasing business in the future.

Apart from its impact on the Association's bottom line, for New England's apple growers the fair could not happen at a better time, beginning in mid-September at the peak of the fresh harvest. Nor could it have a bigger or more appreciative audience: the 2014 Big E drew a record 1.5 million visitors, mostly from the six New England states, but also from across the country and around the globe, all



interested in learning more about the region and its agriculture.

For 17 straight days every September, Bar, who has managed the booth for the past six years, and Russell listen to people's stories about apples, answer their questions, hand them literature, direct them to orchards, and otherwise educate them about the varieties grown in New England. With the additional counter space this year, we were able to display up to one dozen varieties of apples at once from 10 Massachusetts orchards (we are free to promote New England apples in conversation, literature, and signage, but the apples we sell must be Massachusetts-grown).

It's a tremendous marketing opportunity, a fact not lost on the participating orchards, which provide us with some of the most luscious fruit of the season. Some orchards provide us with

brochures, too, but the apples alone showcase the region at its finest, to the benefit of every grower, large and small.

Over the course of the fair, we displayed 45 beautiful bushels of 13 different apple varieties (Akane, Cortland, Empire, Gala, Gravenstein, Honeycrisp, Macoun, Marshall McIntosh, McIntosh, Mollie's Delicious, Rambour Franc, Silken, and Williams' Pride). Apples were supplied by these ten orchards:

Atkins Farms in Amherst

The Big Apple in Wrentham

Brookfield Orchards in North Brookfield

Carlson Orchards in Harvard

Clarkdale Fruit Farms in Deerfield

Nestrovich Fruit Farm in Granville

Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain

Red Apple Farm in Phillipston

Tougas Family Farm in Northborough

University of Massachusetts Cold Spring Orchard in Belchertown

As always, the booth featured award-winning cider donuts from **Atkins Farms**, and fresh apple cider from **Carlson Orchards**. A new group of bakers from The Preservation Society in Granby, Massachusetts, did a nearly perfect job assembling, freezing, and delivering apple pies and crisps to our booth, using apples supplied by **Nestrovich Fruit Farm, Pine Hill Orchards, Red Apple Farm, and University of Massachusetts Cold Spring Orchard**.

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New England Apples booth crew Cheryl Pigeon, Chris Weeks, Russell Powell, and booth manager Bar Lois Weeks stop to catch their breath. One-and-a-half-million fairgoers descended on the Big E this year!



Many thanks to Judy Podell (seen here in 2012) who joined us again from Hebron, Connecticut, to volunteer in the apple booth.

The apple booth also benefits from continuity in its staff. Both **Cheryl Pigeon** and **Chris Weeks**, Bar's son, have worked in the booth for the past five years. Chris is a graphic designer, and he designs all the booth's signage. Chris's younger brother **Kevin Weeks** drives up from his teaching job in New Jersey for the busy final weekend of the fair. **Judy Podell** of Connecticut, has volunteered for a lengthy shift each of the past two years. With the added booth space, we were fortunate to find another hard worker in **Judy LaPlante**.

Everything is now in place for our Big E presence to grow in 2015 and beyond — including a valuable year of experience in the new space. People will be more familiar with our location. We'll make the booth more attractive by adding huge enlargements of orchard photography on the walls, and by closing off the area beneath the sinks.

We'll plan a day before and during next year's fair to pick up apples from orchards throughout Massachusetts to allow more members to participate. We will have a better handle on what to order. As always, we will review the product mix. But there will be no major new expenses, and we should make great gains as a result.

Our success, like that of the growers, depends upon good weather, and this year's was absolutely perfect. But even if it's not as uniformly good in 2015, we still anticipate growth with an ideal audience and setting for promoting New England apples.

— Russell Steven Powell



McIntosh from The Big Apple Farm in Wrentham, Massachusetts



Macouns from Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain, Massachusetts



Silken from Cold Spring Orchard in Belchertown, Massachusetts

Can't stop talking about apples

THE ASSOCIATION'S multi-platform presence on the internet gets information about New England apples to people in a variety of ways over time. The publications give New England apples year-round visibility in real space and time.

But much of the consumer education and apple promotion occur through personal appearances by Executive Director Bar Lois Weeks and Senior Writer Russell Steven Powell.

In addition to staffing the booth for 17 days at The Big E, Weeks and Powell have visited more than 30 New England orchards between them since September, talking with growers and their customers, and taking photographs.

Powell has made more than 15 appearances to read from and talk about his new book, Apples of New England, since September, including 12 events in a 30-day stretch beginning in October, at such places as Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Historic Deerfield, and five member orchards. He has more events lined up for winter and spring.

Powell and Weeks both served as judges at the Great New England Apple Pie Contest at Wachusett Mountain's annual AppleFest October 18; made a presentation and apple tasting at White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield, Connecticut, October 25; and attended events at Franklin County (Massachusetts) CiderDays, which the Association helps sponsor, November 1. They staffed a table at the Connecticut Farm Bureau's annual meeting on November 14.

Wherever there are two or more people, Weeks and Powell talk about New England apples. If you would like to hear from them, write to info@newenglandapples.org. Can't stop talking about apples!



Gala from Carlson Orchards in Harvard, Massachusetts



Two of the Carlson brothers, Frank and Robert, of Carlson Orchards in Harvard, Massachusetts, dropped in to look at the new booth. Fresh Carlson cider is, by all accounts, the most delicious cider at the fair.



Marshall McIntosh from Red Apple Farm in Phillipston, Massachusetts

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Publications Report:

A new calendar, book, and brochure

THERE ARE limited supplies of the 2015 New England Apples wall calendar for individuals or member orchards. The 12x12 calendar features a different apple variety every month, plus photographs of orchards from around New England by Executive Director Bar Lois Weeks and Senior Writer Russell Steven Powell.

For information about purchasing calendars, email info@newenglandapples.org.

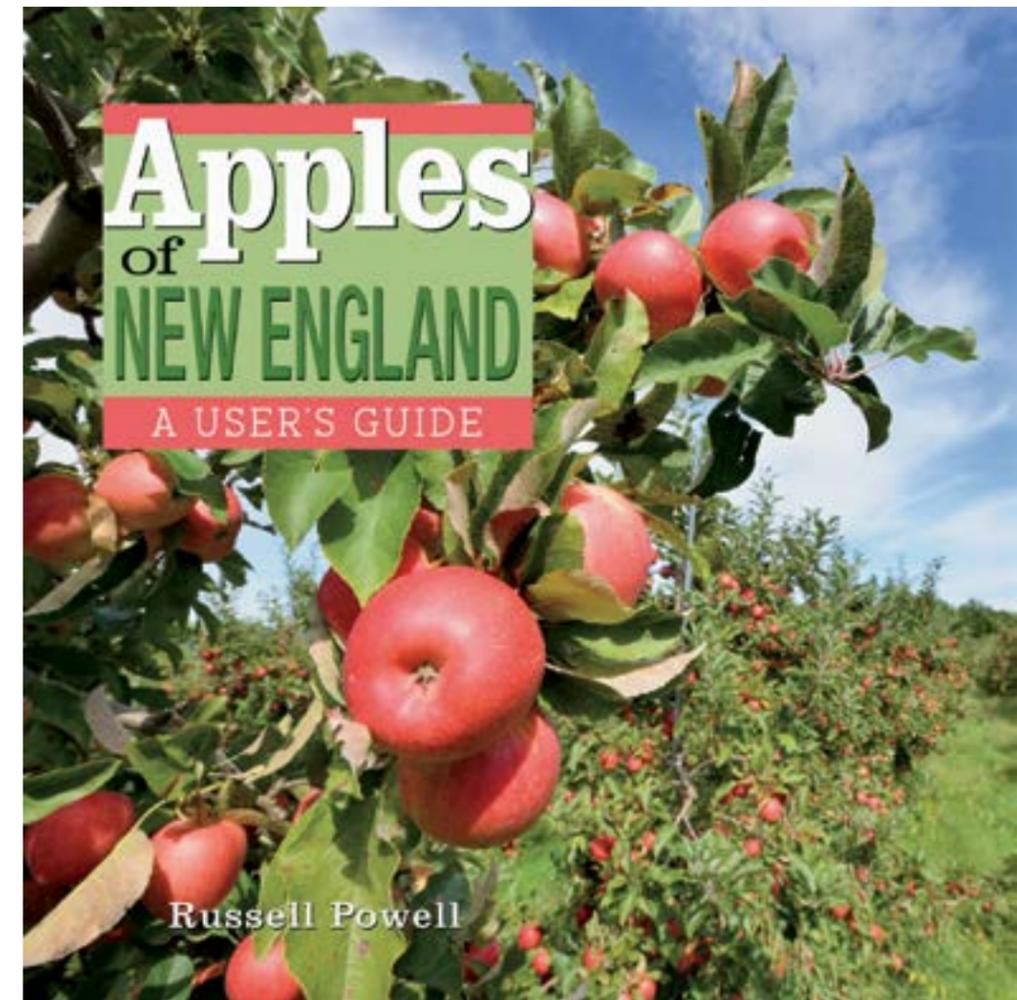


Cortland from Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain, Massachusetts

THE NEW ENGLAND APPLE ASSOCIATION redesigned its popular brochure, “New England Apples,” and sent supplies to member orchards in September. The brochure has new recipes and information on nutrition, and a ripening chart on one side, and a fold-out poster on the other, with photographs and descriptions of 14 of the region’s most popular apples.



Empire from Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain, Massachusetts



POWELL AND WEEKS published their second book about apples in August, *Apples of New England* (Countryman Press). *America’s Apple* (Brook Hollow Press), their first book published in 2012, was reissued as a paperback in August.

Written by Powell, *Apples of New England* is an indispensable resource for anyone searching for apples in New England orchards, farm stands, or grocery stores — or trying to identify an apple tree in their own backyard. The book contains color photographs by Weeks of more than 200 apples discovered, grown, or sold in New England, accompanied by notes about flavor and texture, history, ripening time, storage quality, and best use. *Apples of New England* offers practical advice about rare heirlooms and newly discovered apples.

Apples of New England includes chapters on the rich tradition of apple growing in New England, and on the “fathers” of American apples, Massachusetts natives John Chapman (“Johnny Appleseed”) and Henry David Thoreau. *Apples of New England* presents the apple in all its splendor: as a biological wonder, as a super food, as a work of art, and as a cultural icon.

America’s Apple takes a comprehensive, journalistic look at the United States apple industry, with chapters on horticulture, heirlooms, apple drinks, pests and disease, food safety, and apple recipes.

Social media report:

New England apples hurtling through cyberspace

MORE PEOPLE are spending more time than ever before on the New England Apple Association website, newenglandapples.org. With nearly a month still remaining in 2014, the site has already attracted more than 66,000 visitors and 3.1 million hits, both establishing record highs for the fourth straight year:

Year	Visitors	% Increase	Hits	% Increase
2010	23,916	--	652,725	--
2011	27,240	14%	763,743	17%
2012	39,090	46%	1,397,201	83%
2013	59,855	53%	2,485,219	78%
2014*	69,430	16%	3,293,910	32.5%

* through December 24

SINCE SEPTEMBER 6, the weblog newenglandorchards.org, now completing its fifth season, has averaged more than 1,250 readers per week.

The 10 most popular posts since the weblog began in 2010, and the date published:

Winning New England Apple Pie Recipes Feature Cortlands, October 28, 2011

Marvelous Macoun Apples, September 21, 2011

Early New England Apples: Ginger Gold and Jersey Mac, August 17, 2011

Beautiful Ugly Apples (Golden, Knobbed, and Roxbury Russets, Pomme Grise, and Pitmaston Pineapple), December 9, 2011

Who Makes the Best Cider Donut?, September 13, 2012

Classic Cookers: Northern Spy, Baldwin, and Rhode Island Greening Apples, October 13, 2011

Pears with Apples (Like Shamrock, Honeycrisp, and Hudson's Golden Gem), October 20, 2011

McIntosh and Apple Crisp, September 11, 2013

Time To Get Wealthy (Apples), August 30, 2011

Nothing Beats a McIntosh Apple, September 13, 2011

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For the year 2014 to date, the most popular posts have been:

Marvelous Macoun Apples, September 21, 2011

Winning New England Apple Pie Recipes Feature Cortlands, October 28, 2011

Beautiful Ugly Apples (Golden, Knobbed, and Roxbury Russets, Pomme Grise, and Pitmaston Pineapple), December 9, 2011

Who Makes the Best Cider Donut?, September 13, 2012

Early New England Apples: Ginger Gold and Jersey Mac, August 17, 2011

What Is the Best Pie Apple?, November 8, 2014

McIntosh and Apple Crisp, September 11, 2013

Classic Cookers: Northern Spy, Baldwin, and Rhode Island Greening Apples, October 13, 2011

In with the New (Cameo, CrimsonCrisp, and Topaz Apples), September 27, 2013

A Quality 2014 Apple Forecast for New England (Plus Zestar! and Sweet Sixteen), August 27, 2014

• • •

MORE THAN 115,000 have viewed the 17 video programs on apple growing on the Association website and YouTube.

The top three: **New England Apples - Pruning the Trees, Part 1**, with more than 35,000 views; **New England Pick-Your-Own Orchards**; and **Apple Pie, Part 1: Preparing the Filling**.

The most recent programs, a three-part series on integrated pest management, were added in August:

New England Apple Growers Battle Pests with IPM (Part 1 of 3)

New England Apple Growers Battle Pests with IPM (Part 2 of 3)

New England Apple Growers Battle Pests with IPM (Part 3 of 3)

The Best of
THE BIG E

People young and old—and even a canine—visited our booth from near and far to taste and learn about New England apples.



(Front) Jordan tries his first Atkins cider donut with his family, (back, left to right) Noah, Earl, and Kendra of Providence, Rhode Island.



Jaxon of Agawam, Massachusetts, is liking his first Atkins cider donut!



From the Balkan Peninsula, Valbona Bytyqi of Pristina, Kosov enjoyed her first Macoun, grown at Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain, Massachusetts



Ed Smith of Waterbury, Connecticut, timed his visit perfectly. His favorite apple, Cortland, had just arrived one hour earlier from Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain, Massachusetts!



Every year John and Theresa Golonka of Chicopee, Massachusetts, with daughter Judi (center) and grandson Blake, are our apple pie aficionados.



Fifteen-month-old baby May is our youngest new fan of Carlson's fresh apple cider. She and her parents, Justin and Patricia, visited us from Worcester, Massachusetts.



Fellow photographer Sharron Ampagoomian of Northbridge, Massachusetts, picks a Rambour Franc, also known as Summer Rambo, from Red Apple Farm in Phillipston, Massachusetts. This early-season variety is one of the oldest known apples, first grown in Picardy, France, in 1535. Sharron likes apple picking at McDougal Orchards in Springvale, Maine, while visiting her daughter.



From Simsbury, Connecticut, twins Austin and Wyatt are two and one-half years old. Their favorite wavered back and forth between an Atkins cider donut and a fresh-picked McIntosh from Brookfield Orchards in North Brookfield, Massachusetts.

Baby Cora, shown here with her parents Brian and Marci of New Haven, Connecticut, finds the apple crisp startlingly delicious if not a little messy!

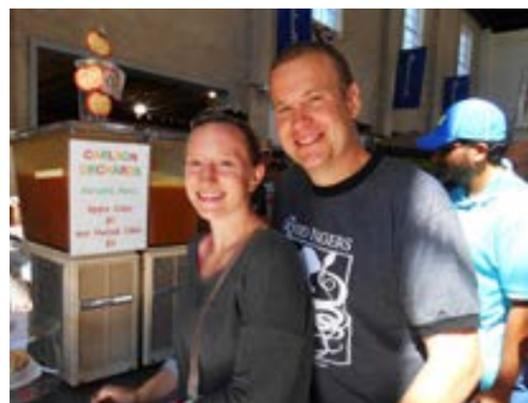
Cheryl Pigeon and Judy LaPlante rolling out the hospitality!

Chris Weeks preps apples for the popular Apple Pie Smoothies served at the booth.



Left to right, Alex and Holly of Ansonia, New Hampshire, look on as Pauly and Monica of Norwalk and Newtown, Connecticut, respectively, provide all of us with some Saturday night entertainment.

Elizabeth, 5 years old, and her brother CJ, 2 years old, chose sweet Galas from Tougas Family Farm in Northborough, Massachusetts. They are shown here with their parents Elizabeth and Juan Carlos of Puerto Rico.



Gretchen and Spencer Yatzook of Meriden, Connecticut, could not pass by without stopping for a cup of Gretchen's Uncle Franklyn's (Frank Carlson's) apple cider!

Five-year-old Maliyah of Bristol, Connecticut, is as sweet as the fresh Carlson apple cider she loves.

The Wenzel family traveled from Las Vegas, Nevada, to visit their Massachusetts roots. They bought a copy of Russell Powell's new book, **Apples of New England**, to find out what New England apples are all about.

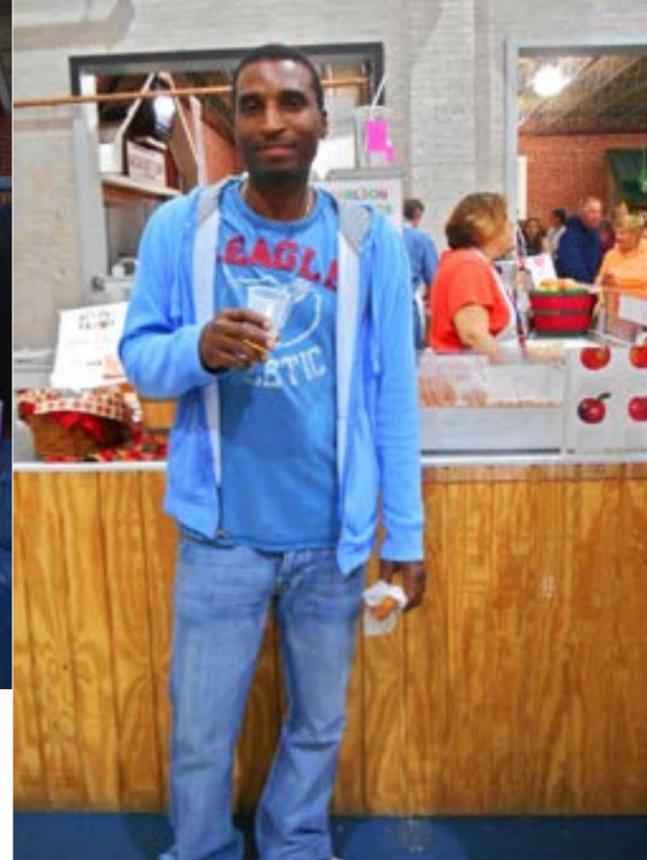
Ken and Jennifer stopped in to buy four-year-old Kieran his first Atkins cider donut.



Brynn, a second-grader from Glastonbury, Connecticut, tries her very first Atkins cider donut. They are made fresh each day at Atkins Farms in Amherst, Massachusetts.



Alex Dowse of Dowse Orchards in Sherborn, Massachusetts, samples a Mac from another eastern Massachusetts orchard, The Big Apple in Wrentham.



Gary Payton of St. Catherine, Jamaica, loved his first experience of New England's quintessential fall beverage, Carlson's fresh apple cider.



Zoe, Catherine, Kaitlyn, and Zach had just visited the Maine house and were in the mood for our own brew of hot mulled cider, made from Carlson's fresh cider.



Mel Jensen of Granville, Massachusetts, talked about his father's orchard, Jensen Orchards, now out of operation, down the road from Ray Nestrovich's Fruit Farm, also in Granville.

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Bonnie of Jasper, Georgia, said she isn't a big fan of donuts, but after trying an Atkins cider donut, she tempered her statement.



Rick and Joyce traveled from Harker Heights, Texas, to be a part of the Big E experience. They happened to stop in on September 26, John Chapman's (Johnny Appleseed's) 240th birthday – Rick is originally from Leominster, Massachusetts, Chapman's birthplace.



A crowd of Powells from Washington state needed their fix of New England apple fare. From left to right: Brian, Cassie, Lane, and Barbara; far right: Jonathan is from Sanbornton, New Hampshire.

Brothers Kevin and Chris Weeks team up on the last and busiest weekend of the fair.

Sisters Gemma and Iris Gochinski of Sunderland, Massachusetts, rolled in on the last day of the fair. Their father, Tim, helped with renovations of the booth.



Victor Bernstein of Windsor, Connecticut, sinks his teeth into his first Empire, an excellent all-purpose cross of McIntosh and Red Delicious.

2014 Maine Wild Blueberry Crown Princess Rebekah Hilt and 2014 Maine Sea Goddess Abby Hersom visited us from Appleton and Rockland, Maine, respectively.

Karen Lohr of Storrs, Connecticut, gives Sasha a healthy treat! To help Karen reach her goal of \$9,500 for Sasha's specialized training through National Education for Assistance Dog Services (NEADS), please visit gofundme.com/KarensDog



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