



Fresh Prospects

The Prospect Heights CSA Newsletter

ALL ABOUT APPLES

The old cliché, 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away,' is certainly true. But this familiar adage understates the numerous health benefits contained in this fruit that was a favorite of the ancient Greeks and Romans and has survived in popularity over the ages.

There are over 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the United States, and over 7,500 grown world-wide. Apple varieties range in size from as small as a cherry to as large as a grapefruit. Next to oranges, apples are this country's most popular and profitable crop. New York State is among the top apple-producing states, next to include Washington, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Together, these states produced over 80% of the nation's apple supply. The 'Delicious' variety are the most popular among Americans.

Apples are hearty fruit that can withstand frost and temperate climates, which is why there were so popular throughout Europe and North America since early times. The fruit originated in the region between the Caspian and Black Sea. Aside from Crabapples, the only species native to North America, other apple varieties were planed by the first Puritan settlers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In fact, scientists have found evidence that humans were consuming apples as early as 6500 B.C.

These tasty fruit, which are part of the rose family, are an excellent source of nutrition. Apples are high in fiber and antioxidants, most of which are found in the peel. A medium, unpeeled apple contains about 3 grams of fiber, more than 10% of the recommended daily fiber intake. Fiber reduces cholesterol levels and consequently the risk of heart attack and stroke, which are caused by plaque-filled arteries.

Apples are also high in flavonoids, a type of pigment in apples responsible for their color. Flavonoids have also been found to prevent heart disease. A study conducted by Finnish researchers conducted a study where the diets of 5,000 Finnish men and women were documented over 20 years. Those who ate the most apples and other flavonoid-rich foods (such as onions and tea), were found to have a 20% lower risk of heart disease than those who ate the least of these foods. In fact, apple skin and onions are the two major food sources of a potent flavonoid called quercetin. When combined with Vitamin C, quercetin also aids in strengthening the body's immune system. Other common ailments that regular apple consumption can combat include cancer, asthma, type 2 diabetes, and menopausal bone loss.

Many other locales aside from The Big Apple use this amazing fruit as a state symbol. They include The apple is the official state fruit of New York, West Virginia, Washington and Rhode Island. It is the official state flower of Michigan. When Jo Apples' most recent appearance in history occurred in the 1800s in the U.S., when Johnny Appleseed—whose real name was John Chapman—walked over 100,000 square miles planting apple trees, he probably had no idea how much of an American icon the apple would become.

Sources:

<http://whfoods.org/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=15>

<http://www.foodreference.com/html/fapples.html>

<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/apples/facts.html>

DON'T FORGET

Want to put in your two cents on the CSA experience? You have until November 4 to participate in a survey that will help us make next year's season even better. Go to <http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=WEB2272XVQZ78T> or click on the link posted at www.freshprospects.blogspot.com.

Our all-volunteer CSA needs you! It's not too late to sign up for an extra work shift by emailing prospectheightscsa@gmail.com. Better yet, join the core group to lay the foundations for the 2008 season. We'll be holding an informational meeting for all interested parties at 7:45pm, right after distribution on November 15th. We hope to see you there!