



Preserving, promoting and developing Wellington North's unique cultural resources to build a vibrant community and a prosperous economy.

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR SEPTEMBER CELEBRATES THE ROTHWELL FAMILY FARM & APPLE ORCHARD

The adage “An apple a day keeps the doctor away” originated in Wales in 1866 but the wording was actually “Eat an apple on going to bed and you’ll keep the doctor from earning his bread”. The current wording reappeared in 1913 and if you want to try this theory, a great place to visit is Rothwell Family Farm & Apple Orchard on Sideroad 7, west of Kenilworth.

This 200-acre family farm has 6 acres planted in apples. They began in 1976 and now have 13 varieties including: Courtland, Empire, Paula-red, McIntosh, Gala, Ambrosia, Spy, Honeycrisp, Jonagold, Russet, Tolman Sweet, Spartan, and 1 Wealthy tree. They have had as many as 1400 trees but care for approximately 800 now.

Growing trees requires a large investment as it may take 3 to 9 years for one to mature and produce fruit. A determining factor is the variety that is being grown and the yield per acre again depends on several factors. One is weather, and another how close the trees are planted, generally 1 to 2 feet apart. Apple trees can produce between 200 to 2,000 bushels per acre however the provincial average is 400. In 2012, the heat wave was so severe that only 1 percent of the potential yield was produced.



Between the rows

The lifespan of an apple tree depends on the variety. Some trees on the farm are 45 years old and will still continue to produce for many decades if they are carefully pruned. Spraying ensures that the apples are of high quality. The Rothwells also produce Apple Cider and Apple Butter and sell local honey.



Courtland Apples

The apples are kept in cold storage so that they may be sold locally into the winter. An Ida-red apple improves while in storage. It becomes more succulent and milder by February. On the other hand, a McIntosh doesn't store well and will become soft over time. An Ambrosia is another variety that will keep well for an extended period.

Terry Rothwell advises that certain apples have special uses. For baking pies, Wealthy, which is an old variety, is the best. For making applesauce, he prefers Paula-reds. To just munch, either a Courtland, Ambrosia, or Gala are really good. Courtland apples are a favourite in Waldorf Salads at fancy restaurants. Pies that are made in October from fresh apples and then frozen, have a better flavour than pies that are made later in the year from apples that have been taken out of storage.

Whatever your choice, biting into an apple tingles the taste buds.

Submitted with permission, by Penny Renken, Wellington North Cultural Roundtable