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Tree Fruit Varieties for the Great North Woods

Growing fruit in Coös County and other colder sites in New Hampshire can be challenging for the home grower. Winter temperatures of -30^{o} to -35^{o} F or even colder are not uncommon. A short growing season, often as short as 90 days is an additional risk fruit growers face in the Great North Woods.



Figure 1 – Liberty apple ready for harvest. Photo: W. Lord

The tree fruit varieties listed in this fact sheet have been selected with these limits in mind. They have been selected for their ability to withstand winter temperatures common in northern New Hampshire and ripen a crop of quality fruit in a short growing season. Pest resistance and value for certain uses such as canning or freezing have been noted where appropriate. A partial list of nurseries that offer many of these tree fruit varieties has been included at the end of this fact sheet.

Fruit trees require a significant commitment of time and effort. Information on the cultural requirements for the various fruits is available at County Extension offices throughout New Hampshire. See the website at: www.extension.unh.edu

Apples

Most apple cultivars will not set fruit without cross pollination. Plant at least two varieties to ensure cross-pollination. In addition, insect pollination by honey bees and a variety of native pollinators such as bumble bees is essential.

We recommend apple cultivars with resistance to apple scab, cedar apple rust and other apple diseases for home gardeners. These eliminate the need to spray with fungicides to control these troublesome diseases, making home production of high quality apples much easier. The following varieties have good to excellent fruit quality and are resistant to apple scab, the major disease problem for apples in New Hampshire. Resistance to fire blight, powdery mildew, and other minor diseases varies.

Disease Resistant Apple Varieties	
Redfree	Medium-large, attractive, bright, red apple with tender, slightly juicy flesh. Flavor is sweet and pleasant. Ripens Sept. 1 in northern NH.
Wolf River	Large, bright red apple. Fruit mealy with so-so flavor. Good for baking.
CrimsonCrisp	Large, red apple. Very nice sweet/tart flavor. Ripens mid-September. Will store a couple of months.
Liberty	Very attractive, dark red, large apple that ripens in early Oct. Flesh is sweet, slightly juicy and slightly coarse. A very high-quality apple that stores well.
Freedom	A large, yellow and red apple that is good for pies and sauces. Ripens early October.
Other Popular Apple Cultivars	
Akane	A high quality, early red apple. Crisp.Very scab resistant though not immune.
Paulared	High quality, red, late summer. Very productive--requires thinning.
Sweet Sixteen	Large, red, good flavor, super hardy.
Honeycrisp	Large, red, super crisp and delicious, ripens mid September. Stores well.
SnowSweet	Large, red, crisp apple with a sweet/tart flavor. Very high quality fruit.
Cortland	Large, red-striped. Late September-early October. White flesh resists browning. Excellent for dessert, culinary and salad use. Very scab susceptible.
Haralson	Crisp, red, good dessert quality. Ripens with Cortland. Needs thinning.
Macoun	Very flavorful and crisp. Ripens late Sept. in north. Tends to be biennial.
Eating Crab Apples	
Transcendent	2 inch diameter crab, excellent canner. Extremely hardy.
Chestnut	Fruits nearly 2 inches. Noted for a nutty flavor.
Winter Redflesh	Red-fleshed crab for sauce and jelly. Purple flowers.
Montreal Beauty	Small, good for jelly.

Pears

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Harrow Delight	Fire blight resistant. Medium/large fruit with good flavor, juicy. Late Aug.
Clapp's Favorite	Fire blight susceptible. Large, juicy fruit ripens late August.
Flemish Beauty	Medium size, excellent flavor. Mid Sept.
Nova	Large, round, juicy pear. Mid Sept.
Waterville	Large fruit with coarse, juicy flesh. Stores well. Mid Sept.
Luscious	Fire blight Resistant. Medium, juicy, very good for fresh eating. Oct. 1.

Peaches

Peaches and nectarines are generally hardy to -10^{O} F. They are not recommended for Coös County and other colder sites in New Hampshire. If you must try one, Reliance is the only option.

Peaches	
Reliance	Developed at UNH. The most winter hardy variety; has cropped after -25^{O}F. Medium- sized fruit of fair quality. Requires heavy thinning to achieve good fruit size.

Hybrid Plums

The so-called hybrid plums are generally hardy in northern New Hampshire. Cultivars have been developed by crossing selected native or wild plums with the more desirable, but less hardy, Japanese types. All are self unfruitful and cross-pollination is essential.

Hybrid Plums	
Underwood	Fruit medium-sized, red and juicy. Good for jam and preserves. Ripens early.
Pipestone	Fruit large, red and sweet. Good fresh and for preserves.
Superior	Fruit large, firm and juicy. Excellent fruit quality. Fruits must be thinned as tree will overload.
Toka	Fruit medium-sized and bright red. Used as a pollinator for other hybrid varieties.

Sour or Pie Cherries

Sour cherries are very hardy, but they do bloom very early and spring frosts can be a problem. Sour cherries do not require cross-pollination.

Sour or Pie Cherries	
North Star	Dwarf growth habit, fair quality.
Meteor	Semi-dwarf growth habit. Good quality

Dwarf Rootstocks for Apples in the Great North Woods

There are many reasons to plant dwarf apple trees. They bear fruit younger in life, are easier to prune and harvest, and pest management with these smaller trees is easier to accomplish. A stake to help support large crops of fruit on young dwarf apple trees is helpful and fencing to protect trees from deer is essential.

There are several rootstock options for apples for the Great North Woods. M.7 is suitable for many soil types and will produce a tree perhaps 12 feet tall. M.26 will produce a smaller tree that will bear fruit younger in the tree's life. Bud 9 is a newer dwarfing rootstock that is very winter hardy and produces a tree about 8 feet tall. Seedling rootstock may make sense when planting trees for wildlife as once the tree is mature, the fruiting zone of the tree will above the browse line of deer.

Spacing Guidelines

Apple tree spacing guide for the home orchard in the Great North Woods			
Rootstock	**Between Rows**	**Between Trees in Row**	**Approx. Mature Tree Height**
Seedling	25'	35'	20+
M.7	12'	20'	12'
M.26	8'	16'	10'
Bud.9	7'	13'	8'

List of Nurseries*

Adams County Nursery, Aspers, PA 17304 - http://www.acnursery.com

Cummins Nursery, 1408 Trumansburg Rd, Ithaca NY 14456 - http://www.cumminsnursery.com

Fedco Seeds, PO Box 520, Waterville, ME 04903 - http://www.fedcoseeds.com

St. Lawrence Nursery, 325 State Hwy 345, Potsdam, NY 13676 - http://www.sln.potsdam.ny.us

Stark Bros Nurseries and Orchards Co., Louisiana, MO 63353 - http://www.starkbros.com



Figure 2 - Red Clapp's Favorite pear.
Photo: W. Lord

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Revised November 2013

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