

## Apple varieties for Midwest backyard gardeners

Bill Shane, Michigan State University Extension

There are many hundreds of apple varieties available to backyard gardeners that do well under Michigan conditions. Provided here are some suggestions, realizing full well that many personal favorites that do quite well in Michigan may be not listed.

Some of the better apple scab resistant varieties are listed below. Less fungicides sprays are needed for these types, but sprays may be needed for other diseases and for insects. Numbers in parentheses following the variety name is the harvest days before (-) or after (+) compared to Red Delicious, which typically ripens approximately September 20 in southwest Michigan.

### Scab resistant varieties of decent to good quality

Pristine (-67) early yellow variety, smooth skin, will get fire blight

Williams Pride (-50) early Red Delicious type, productive

Crimson Crisp (-10) Red, medium sized, smooth finish, nice sweet / acid balance, nice eating quality, will get fire blight

Pixie Crunch (+5) Medium sized red apple on light green ground color, juicy, with crunch, mild flavor

Enterprise (+15) large bicolored cooking apple, okay eating fresh eating quality

Goldrush (+45\_ very late, very firm yellow / green apple with russet tendency, medium size, with excellent storage characteristics, excellent slice and sauce apple

Novaspy (+10), bicolored, Northern Spy-like, but ripens about 2 weeks earlier, not quite as good as Northern Spy for pies, crisp, very firm

### Scab tolerant (still will need some fungicide treatment)

Honeycrisp(-5) large, bicolored, mild flavored, crisp, and juicy, but prone to fruit blemishes

Akane (10) also called Prime Red, somewhat Jonathan like in flavor, not as prone to fire blight

### Well-known, adapted to Michigan environment, some with higher disease susceptibility, all susceptible to apple scab

Galas (-23) many varieties available, medium sized, sweet, with some spicy characteristics tracing back to Cox's Orange Pippin, good for fresh and for pies, medium shelf life, susceptible to fire blight, Fulford is somewhat larger, earlier, Imperial is older still popular variety, Many newer varieties are available that have more red skin color but otherwise not much better than Imperial

McIntosh (-20) many varieties are available. Ruby Mac, Linda Mac, Miracle Mac are some of the newer strains with better skin color.

Jonagolds (-10) large, dual purpose eating and cooking, sweet, juicy, somewhat tart, medium shelf life, medium fire blight susceptibility. Some of the older varieties have a green skin background that may be considered unattractive. Some of the better coloring varieties are Jonagored, Rubinstar, and Crimson. However, ripening time and flavor of most Jonagolds are similar.

Jonathan (-7) mainly cooking apple, medium size, sweet / acidic, favorite for pie and applesauce, fire blight and powdery mildew susceptible, many varieties including the popular Jonee, Nured, and Ruby Jon

Early season fujis (-3) ripening approximately 1 month before standard fuji – varieties include Rising Sun, Early Auvil, Daybreak, Nickell, Morning Mist. Not quite the quality of standard main season Fujis, but particularly useful in more northern areas with shorter growing seasons

Main season fujis (+20) firm, productive, older strains with greenish hint to the background when ripe,

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/a\\_review\\_of\\_apple\\_scab\\_resistant\\_varieties\\_for\\_commercial\\_growers](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/a_review_of_apple_scab_resistant_varieties_for_commercial_growers)

#### Pollination considerations

Most apple varieties require a second variety as a pollen source. A pollen source needs to bloom at the same time and have compatible pollen.

The early blooming apple varieties such as Transparent, Winesap, Macs may not bloom at the same time as late varieties such as Goldrush, York, Rome, Spy or Melrose.

Triploid varieties such as Mutsu and different strains of Crispin (Mutsu), Jonagold, Winesap, Stayman and Gravenstein have sterile pollen and cannot be used as pollen sources.

A variety of a particular type is generally not a good pollen source for another of the same type. For example Marshall Mac will not be a good pollen source for Ruby Mac.

Golden Delicious and the flowering crab apples are the most commonly used pollinators in commercial plantings. Golden Delicious should not be used as a pollinator for the various Jonagold and Gala strains.

Updated: April 22, 2015