

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2003

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Association News

Another year is upon us, and our first newsletter brings a big thank you to Margaret (McConnell) Paul for taking over mailing out the meeting reminders every month. Other than that small change, our Board was re-elected unanimously in December. Please be aware, however, that most of us will be moving on next election, so we will definitely need a new President, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor. Start thinking now!

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE AT A DIFFERENT LOCATION. We will be attending an apple tasting at the Natural Pantry in Anchorage, in the University Center near the corner of 36th Ave. and the Old Seward Highway. Please arrive on Thursday, February 13th promptly at 7 PM, because we have to be out by 9 PM.

Please note that our annual apple grafting will be in the beginning of April, so watch for your reminder card, and bring scion wood! This is an opportunity to introduce new people to our club, so feel free to tell and/or bring your friends.

If you have not renewed your dues, please get them to Alice Brewer as soon as possible if you want to keep receiving the newsletter and meeting reminders.

Finally, I would love some more personal contributions from our members for the newsletter. Write up an opinion, a summary of a tree you saw on a trip, or a book review, and I will make you look good! The next issue should go out right after the grafting in April, so write something up now before spring takes our minds to outdoor activities.

Soil Health

by TAMI SCHLIES

Our guest speaker in January, Mr. John Evans of Palmer, got me thinking about soil. He created Alaska Bounty, a "soil stimulant system" that replaces natural bacteria and fungi lost in chemical fertilizing, harvesting, and even tilling the

soil. His unique system breeds microorganisms by aerating a special compost tea, versus the organisms found in such things as "soil soup" or even regular compost tea, and he claims this is

better for the soil. And better soil means better plants.

Now, first of all, what do these microorganisms do exactly for us gardeners? Well, first of all, they break down the insoluble nutrients in the soil, as well as in the organic fertilizers we might use. In this process, they release the nutrients into the soil in soluble form for our plants to use. And their little bodies hold on to a continuous supply, like a slow release fertilizer, as long as we keep them - ie. our soil - healthy.

You cannot use too much according to John, because it is not a fertilizer and will not burn plants. Used along with organic fertilizers, it will reduce fertilizer use by up to 70% because the organisms utilize the nutrients and improve the overall soil structure.

According to John, this allows the plants to grow not only larger, as his many giant vegetables attest to, but also sweeter. He regularly uses a refractometer to measure the sugar levels in his produce as well as the produce in the grocery stores for comparison. And the plants are better able to shrug off diseases and pests, and even neglect or drought.

Mycorrhizae

After John's visit, I decided to do a little bit of research on mycorrhizae in particular. Remember, fungi do not create food on their own, like plants do. Mycorrhizae is a type of symbiotic fungus that interacts with plant roots, exchanging absorbed mineral nutrient ions for the sugars the plant produces.

Mycorrhizae also increases a plant's effective root system by up to 700% by breaking down and absorbing nutrients farther away - up to 30 feet away. Mycorrhizae not only distribute nutrients,

but also depress many root diseases caused by pathogenic fungi and nematodes. When you disturb natural soils, by digging or rototilling, you break up mycorrhizal systems and force them to start over, interrupting the absorptive area they share with the native plants. More than 99% of the earth's plants utilize this fungus to their benefit. There are six types of mycorrhizae, but only two are more considered major types, so that is what I will cover here: ectomycorrhizae and endomycorrhizae.

Ectomycorrhizae

Ecto is the suffix for outside, so ectomycorrhizae tend to grow on the outside of the root tips. They penetrate the spaces between the cells of the root's outer layer, covering the root like a glove, and then fungal hyphae (hair-like filaments) grow outward from the roots into the surrounding soil. These gather water and nutrients and share them with the plant. They have been shown to be particularly good at absorbing phosphate, potassium, and alkaloid metals.

Ectomycorrhizae also seem to be able to protect a plant from soil born diseases and pathogens. They do this by producing a sort of antibiotic that keeps bad bacteria at bay, rather like penicillin. The "glove" they form around the roots may also act as a physical barrier against invasion.

Ectomycorrhizae also produce growth hormones and regulators which can alter the metabolism and growth of the roots themselves, encouraging healthy growth. This type of fungus tends to colonize coniferous trees and hardwoods.

Endomycorrhizae

As you may guess, endo is the suffix for inside, therefore endomycorrhizae grow mainly *inside* the cells of the plant root's outer surface, rather than between the

cells. These do not form the glove around the plant root like the ectomycorrhizae, and therefore are impossible to see without a microscope. But they do send out a net of hyphae to gather water and nutrients.

John talked about using “BioVAM” in his compost aeration mixture, and now I know what VAM stands for. It is short for vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae – two structures formed by endomycorrhizae within the cells of the root. 90% of the world’s higher plant types have a relationship with this kind of mycorrhizae. Arbuscules are bodies made up of hyphae that take carbohydrates from the cells and increase until they fill the cell completely, then they break down and release their stored nutrients to the host plant. The mycorrhizae then moves on to another plant cell. Little is known about vesicles, but scientists suspect that they play a role in propagation.

VAM in particular are good at absorbing phosphorus, copper, iron, zinc and calcium, plus some potassium, though this is highly affected by the balance of calcium, nitrogen, and potassium levels in the soil. This type of fungus tends to favor turf grasses, ornamentals, hardwoods, and fruit and nut trees.

Other Facts

Another interesting theory about mycorrhizae is that it allows plants to communicate with each other. There are cases where a plant is stripped clean of foliage by insects faster than it can regrow the leaves. As soon as one plant becomes infected, the other plants in the area

change chemistry and begin to secrete toxins to keep the insects from preying on them. Scientists believe mycorrhizae may play a role in this communication.

Though most mycorrhizae are invisible to the naked eye, there are a few that produce fruiting bodies. Small fungi that appear near birch, hornbeam, larch, and spruce may be a type of ectomycorrhizal fungi. Believe it or not, truffles are also a type of ectomycorrhizal fungus.

Ectomycorrhizal trees	Endomycorrhizal trees
Arborvitae	Ash
Aspen	Buckeye
Basswood	Crabapple
Beech	Dogwood
Chestnut	Ginko
Birch	Huckleberry
Cottonwood	Hawthorn
Fir	Holly
Hemlock	Horsechestnut
Hickory	Locust
Larch	London Planetree
Oak	Magnolia
Spruce	Maple
Willow	Redbud
	Sycamore
	Walnut
	Yew

Orchard Reports

Peters Creek, Alaska

by DWIGHT BRADLEY

Jan. 6, 2003

This was the third straight good apple year for us in Peters Creek. The winter of 2001-2002 was about average, with coldest temperatures in the range of -25°F (one day I'll start keeping better track). Winterkill was minimal.

We hosted a pruning workshop in late spring. The group waded through a foot of snow and worked on about a dozen trees that were chosen to demonstrate a particular pruning dilemma. Lots of trees in our orchard were planted in the mid 1990s and were damaged by winterkill when very young. Most of the survivors were non-ideal, lacking the right number of scaffolds, or having two trunks, or having narrow crotches on major scaffolds. The consensus, for really misshapen trees, was to prune drastically, and either kill it or cure it. Now that we have a reasonably large orchard, this seems like a more tolerable choice than before. I look forward to another pruning workshop in 2003 when we'll get a chance to hack off some more double trunks.

We now have 97 apple trees in the ground, planted between 1992 and 2002. We harvested about 450 pounds of apples, the largest harvest yet. About 60 trees bore fruit. A wetter than average summer led to vigorous vegetative growth. So next year we can reasonably hope to pick more than 500 pounds of apples. We put up about 40 quarts of applesauce and 10 gallons of cider.

We continued to have minor problems with scab and leaf rollers. Still no apple maggots, stem borers, plum curculios,

codling moths, or fireblight—but with global warming, some of these are probably not too far off.

Here are a few comments on particular varieties.

Norland (24 trees). It was the best year for Norlands yet. Big, red fruit with nice aromatics. We picked on Sept. 22, right before I had to go to Australia. The first apples were edible about Sept. 10. Stored inside garbage bags in a cool (~40-45°F) garage, the apples kept for about a month. Norland, it turns out, is not as good as Parkland for applesauce because it takes forever to cook down. Norland appears to be prone to sending up double and even triple trunks. The remedy: during spring pruning, rub off the two or three buds immediately below the highest bud on the central leader. Then during the growing season, use double-ended toothpicks to keep the highest new branches from developing narrow crotches.

Parkland (21 trees). Parkland was not quite as good as Norland this year, but close. The Parklands that are now alive were planted in 1994-1996; several of them that were nearly winter killed in their first few years have finally come back and are all strong. The apples could have been picked about a week before Norland. They kept about 3 weeks in good shape in a 40°F garage.

Trailman/Noret (7 trees). I think Trailman and Noret may be the same thing — either that or scionwood of one or the other of these is being swapped around Alaska with a wrong label. The apple that I've always referred to as Trailman has a small, long, plum-shaped yellow fruit with

unattractively mottled skin. The flesh is excellent, tangy, crisp, tart, and prone to watercoreing. The tree is gangly, with long, weak branches (which I think can be strengthened by cutting back at least halfway during spring pruning). The twigs are a distinctive tan color. The trees are always the first to leaf out and the first to bloom. The apples ripen about a week or two after Norland. The fruit is prone to cracking in August. I can't remember where my first Trailman scionwood came from but I made my first three grafts in 1996. In 1996 I also grafted a supposed Noret which matured to bear fruit that is indistinguishable from the "real" Trailmans. In 2001, I grafted another Noret, though again, I don't recall where the scionwood came from. Then this year I bought a Noret from Fedco Trees in Maine. These last two "Norets" have yet to bear but they look just like Trailman. Can anybody shed light on this?

Rescue (2 trees). Both Rescue trees bore huge crops. Two years ago, one of the trees bore elongate fruit, while the other bore round fruit. The difference was so obvious that I thought there might be two strains of Rescue. Now I think otherwise, because in 2001 and 2002, the apples were pretty much the same on the two trees. By the way, Rescue will keep in excellent condition for about a month in a sealed black garbage bag in a cool garage. The same apples in an open bucket will start to decline in a few days. One of the two Rescue trees is going to need drastic pruning to remove a couple of major scaffolds that have bad bark inclusions in their crotches.

Kerr (5 trees). I don't know what possessed me back in 1996 and 1997 to graft all these Kerrs. I vaguely recall that Kerr had found its way onto a list of recommended apples, vintage 1988, based on one successful tree somewhere in Palmer. Out

of the five trees in our orchard, only two have even born fruit. One of these had one measly small unripe apple and the tree looks like it will die in the coming winter. Another tree, grafted on Borowinka in 1996, is a cute little bush about two feet tall. It bore two unripe apples a couple of years ago, down near the ground, shaded out by grass. One other tree is struggling. The remaining two are doing quite well but never seem to blossom. As soon as I need the space, some of these Kerrs will go.

Heyer 20 is our nicest looking tree, a reliable bearer of fairly large green apples with a red blush. Unfortunately, they don't always ripen. This year, with a very long and mild fall, the Heyer 20s actually ripened by the first week of October. They keep for a couple months in a cool garage. We harvested 50-60 pounds from the one tree.

Heyer 6 bore its first large crop of nice looking, oblate, red apples. They were good for sauce but not ripe enough for fresh eating.

Heyer 12, as usual, bore a decent crop of cooking apples.

Westland (3 trees) continues to make slow growth and may one day be productive. But I'm not overwhelmed by the vigor of this variety. One five-year-old tree bore a couple of large cooking apples.

Morden 359 is still alive (planted 1992) and bore its biggest crop ever, of 30-40 apples. They ripened enough to be usable for cider or sauce this fall.

Novosibirski Sweet bore a nice crop of small, very sweet but blandly non-acidic crabs. A good addition to the cider mix. Thinning these did not help fruit size.

Centennial is a really nice, reliable, yellow apple-crab. Flavor is excellent but the flesh is somewhat dry or woody, and ripens a couple of weeks after Norland. We have one prolific tree planted in 1995 and a couple of much younger ones.

Arbor Dale bore about 100 apples that didn't get close to ripening, even with our exceptionally long fall. Don't bother with this one in the Anchorage area.

Crimson Beauty (planted in 1992) is struggling but not dead; it has set only about 15 apples in the past 5 years. There was no fruit this year, but the few apples that have ripened in the past have been excellent, and a bright red, with red-veined flesh. This would have been a good year for ripening Crimson Beauty, if only the tree had blossomed.

French pruning method encourages fruiting

All the pruning is done in summer, not winter.

by *PETER MITHAM*

"It changes the sap flow in the trees. You divert the growth pattern to dormant buds for future growth, and you get more steady bearing."

Pem van Heek

Pem van Heek, a retired forester living in West Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, maintains a small orchard featuring over a hundred varieties of apples. Most are the so-called heritage varieties--Pitmaston Pineapple, Van der Pool, Zabergau Renette, Liberty, Belle de Boskoop--but there are also the more common Spartan and Gala. In addition, there are a few varieties of pears, and a gnarled quince tree.

And they're all in his backyard, nestled behind a cedar hedge in a quiet residential neighborhood.

Clearly, it's not your typical orchard.

What makes it possible, said Van Heek, is his method of pruning--the Lorette method, named for Louis Lorette (1846-1925), the French arborist who laid out its

principles in the 1903 manual *Petit Guide sur l'Arboriculture*. The book went through two editions before Lorette's death in 1925, and another two revisions afterwards.

The Lorette pruning system became quite popular in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, as growers sought to increase production using limited resources. The principle feature is that no pruning is done in the winter. Trees are only summer pruned.

The system involves severely cutting back new shoot growth in the summer in an attempt to induce darts and fruit spurs to form from secondary buds to bring the tree more quickly into a fruiting mode.

Van Heek, who began collecting his trees about 15 years ago, has a voracious appetite for literature about apples and tree management. The experiences of growers in his native Holland, France, and England, as well as British Columbia (he's a member of the B.C. Fruit Testers' Association), have all contributed to his knowledge and expertise. He adopted the Lorette method because it suited his circumstances--not unlike those in early

twentieth-century Europe--and proved itself in practice.

"His pruning option changes the sap flow in the trees," said van Heek, summarizing what he considers the defining element of the Lorette method. "You divert the growth pattern to dormant buds for future growth, and you get more steady bearing."

Van Heek said that the method is ideal for use in circumstances such as his, where space is limited. The method maximizes yield by disciplining the tree to grow in a limited space while channeling its growth in the way that best supports fruit production. It is applicable to dwarf, semidwarf, and full-size trees, and to pears as well as apples.

In van Heek's yard, dwarf and semidwarf trees are the rule. They stand four feet high in neat rows facing south, supported by bamboo posts or arranged against an outside wall in a variety of espalier forms.

Van Heek explained that he allows each tree to grow freely until the end of June, at which point new shoots are pruned back to their base, just when growth is at its height. This forces the nutrients that would otherwise have been diverted to the new growth into the buds. Further pruning of new shoots is conducted in late summer.

The Lorette method also advises growers to bend desirable new shoots into a semicircle, with their tips down, in order to foster the formation of flower buds as close to the base of the branch as possible. This is important, so that branches are better able to bear the weight of ripening fruit.

And there is plenty of fruit.

Off one tree, an Ananas Renette, he might get up to 50 apples; at the other end of the yard, he shows a Liberty boasting six branches and a four-foot spread that yielded 100 apples.

Van Heek knows of no other grower who uses the Lorette method. While he can vouch for its effectiveness, he admits that others tend to find it odd.

"Most people think you prune in the winter. This is why they find the Lorette method strange," he said. He points out another, more practical barrier to its use: "It takes a fair amount of work if you've got a lot of trees."

Even so, some editions of Lorette's manual feature photos of orchards in early twentieth-century France the size of which rivaled those in British Columbia at the time. But the volume of production has increased dramatically since then, and the method is now best-suited for relatively small operations.

Van Heek and his wife, Mein, eat most of their apples themselves, either raw, in baking, or preserves. Some of the fruit, however, is sold at Capers, a Vancouver-based chain of organic food stores with a location a few minutes' walk from the van Heek orchard.

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Bench Grafting Stone Fruits In The Spring

By BOB PURVIS

Bench-grafting stone fruits in the spring can be done, but the requirements for success are more rigorous than are those for apples or pears. In late January I discussed with Dr. Brian Smith, the stone-fruit breeder at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls, what the requirements are for bench-grafting cherries. Based on his experience, he said that cherry rootstocks should not be grafted when totally dormant, but when there is about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ " of new growth coming out of the top of the rootstock. Possibly because the buds and leaves of cherry are large and use a lot of water, he recommends keeping freshly grafted cherry rootstocks at a temperature of 55 to 60F in a high-humidity environment. At those temperatures, callus tissue will form but the scion buds will be slower to break dormancy.

By contrast, bench grafts of apricot should be kept at about 65 to 70F, but like cherry they need to be kept in a high-humidity environment. Plum grafts seem to callus OK at the same temperature as apricots. I have never bench-grafted peaches successfully in the spring, possibly because they have an even higher heat requirement to form callus tissue. (Also, dormant peach wood is punky or splintery and hard to cut easily with a knife.) The best after-care for cherry, apricot, or plum grafts I can recommend is to put them in a 3 to 5 gallon plastic pot, or a 5-gallon plastic bucket with drainage holes, with the roots covered up with moist potting soil or possibly sawdust and maintained as moist. To maintain high humidity, I pull a large plastic laundry bag over the top of the bucket, being careful to prevent direct contact of the plastic (which will soon become wet) with the tops of the scions on the grafts. I tie the mouth of

the bag loosely with heavy twine. After some of the grafts begin to take, gradually loosen the mouth of the bag to let in drier air, so the leaves on the scions can get used to it. Do not allow the plastic bag to contact the newly forming leaves on the scions, or they will rot; but do keep the pot or bucket in bright indirect light after the leaves begin to emerge, so that they will become green and better able to endure direct sun a month or so later.

Take good care of the roots on the rootstocks: do not let them get too wet, nor too dry. When you transplant your successful grafts into pots or possibly a nursery area outdoors, you should see a fair number of new, white hair roots protruding from the rootstock.

I would welcome comments on this article from other members of the APFG, sharing their experiences and lessons learned with grafting stone fruits. (Of course, most of us know that commercial nurseries almost always propagate stone fruits by T- or chip budding in August. Another NAFEX member here in Minnesota tells me, however, that Van Well Nursery in Wenatchee, WA has gone to bench-grafting sweet cherries on Gisela dwarfing rootstocks in the spring, because they seem to have much better success doing so as opposed to August budding.

Member to Member

➤ Fellow Fruit Growers,

I just heard that the Alaska Community Forestry Program, Cooperative Extension Service, and others are sponsoring a course/program on tree pests the same evening as our March meeting. Most things like time and place are only tentative at this time, but it will be March 13, probably 6:30 to 9:30, and probably at UAA. I was wondering if this could be our March meeting? Might want to put this on your calendar and make arrangements to attend.

For more information contact
Cooperative Extension Service,
Anchorage: 786-6300

AK Community Forestry Program, Anchorage:
269-8465, patricia_joyner@dnr.state.ak.us

There is another all-day (8:30 - 5:00) course scheduled March 7 on the tree pests that I think maybe aimed at professional tree care people. Even if it is, I have not found any of these courses so technical that most of our members could not easily keep up. I think that this course is a longer version of the above mentioned Thursday evening one for home gardeners.

Also, "Trees & Shrubs" is Feb. 8, 1-5:00 p.m. at Inlet View Community School for \$60. I will be talking about the science on how trees and shrubs work and what that has to do with the maintenance and growth.

Debbie Hinchey

➤ **Scionwood available.** I will be traveling to my former home in Selah, WA Feb. 6-9 for the purpose of collecting scionwood at the orchard there. The present owner told me that he will probably take out more trees this spring to put cattle in the nearer of the two pasture areas where they are growing. Therefore, this may be the last time that I can supply scionwood to people in Alaska of certain plum or apricot cultivars. Please call or e-mail me before then if there are varieties on the list that you want. Cost will be \$4.50 per foot postpaid, but Express Mail or 2nd Day Air will be charged out at cost. The list of what is available is in the current issue of the *APFG Newsletter*. (next page)

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MN Ag Statistics Service

Scionwood available from Bob Purvis (See member to member section for contact information.)

Type	Variety	Type	Variety	Type	Variety	Type	Variety
Apricot	Name	Plum, European	Castleton	Cherry	Bear Creek Early		
	Brookcot		Count Althann's Gage		Blackgold	Apple	Norland
	Debbie's G.		DeMontfort		Attika		Norhey
	M.604		Earliblue		Chelan		Norson
	Westcot		Early Italian		Kristin		Parkland
	Rushmore		Imperial Epineuse		Rainier		Cameo
	Harcot		Late Italian		Van		Yataka
	Harglow		Longjohn		Glacier		8C-28-27
	Hargrand		Mount Royal		Del Nord		Zestar
	Harlayne		Opal		Mesabi		Ginger Gold
	Puget Gold		President		Meteor		Honeycrisp
	Tomcot		Seneca		Sweetheart		Prairie Spy
	Jerseycot		Silver Prune		Surefire		Fameuse
	NY 544		Todd	Pear	Taylor's Gold		Enigma
	DR-606		Victory		Ewart		Norcue
	Sweet Pit		Yakima		Savignac		Trailman
	Tilton		Beauty		Luscious		Dolgo Crab
	Double Dandy		Brookgold		Patten		Dearborn's Unk
	Fleming	Plum J or A	Flavor Supreme		HW 604		Fortune
	A.B. Hall		Ptitsin #5		HW 609		September Ruby
	Supkhany		Ptitsin #9		Concorde		Jonamac
	Flavor Giant		Hanska		Stacey		Pristine
	Smith		Rosemary		Clapp's Favorite		Carroll
	Sobotka		Purple Heart		Rescue		Arlet
	Orange Red		Pipestone		Summercrisp		Sansa
	Precious		Superior		Ubileen		Valentine
	Flavor King		Alderman		Beurre Giffard		Roda Mantel
	CBN Plumcot		Toka		Dr. Jules Guyot		Summerred
Interspecific hyb	Bill's Peach Cot		Waneta		Waterville		Viking
	Bill's Nectar P.cot		Gracious		Seckel		RubINETte
	Autumn Sweet		Pembina		Marks		Norda
	Cambridge Gage		LaCrescent		Ure		Centennial
			Monticello				Northern Spy
			Romeo				Oriole
			Underwood				Victory apple

Annual Tasting Of Alaska-Grown Apples

By D. BRADLEY

2002 Results

The annual Alaska-grown apple tasting was held in late September at Bradley's in Peters Creek. About 30 people were there and 20 people rated the apples. We rated 63 different varieties, and 26 repeats. The top five apples this year were Oriole (grown by Tom Marshall), Carroll (grown by Dan Elliott), Vista Bella (grown by Mike O'Brien), Lowland Raspberry (grown by Dan Elliott), and Golden Sentenial (Golden Centennial?) (grown by Kevin Irvin.

Altogether we rated eight Parklands, seven Norlands, four Breakeys, three Rescues, and three Westlands. In the following table, TM is Tom Marshall, DE is Dan Elliott, MO is Mike O'Brien, KI is Kevin Irvin, BB is Bob Boyer, DB is Dwight Bradley, KC is Ken Cassidy, KF is Karl Franke, and VV is Virgil Vochoska.

Variety	Mean	Grower	Brix
Oriole	7.13	TM	13
Carroll	7.00	DE	13
Vista Bella	6.75	MO	13
Lowland	6.65	DE	12
Raspberry			
Golden Sentenial	6.59	KI	13
Sweet Sixteen	6.27	BB	14
Stark Ultra Spire	6.25	KI	12
Garland	6.22	DE	13
Parkland	6.20	KF	
Geneva Early	6.19	TM	13
Red Mantet	6.03	KF	
Norlove	6.00	DE	13
O'Brien Mystery	6.00	MO	12
#2			

Breakey	6.00	MO	12
Norland	6.00	MO	13
Parkland	5.95	MO	12
North Pole	5.94	KI	10.5
Breakey	5.93	TM	11
Noret	5.92	DE	15
Parkland	5.92	KC	13
State Fair	5.89	DE	12
Eighth and M	5.85		12.5
Mantet	5.83	KC	13.5
Trailman	5.75	DB	12.5
Norland 1	5.75	DE	11.5
Rescue	5.75	KC	17
Simonet 1847	5.74	DB	13
Parkland	5.71	DB	13
O'Brien Mystery	5.69	MO	15.5
#1			
Shafer	5.67	DE	11.5
Mantet	5.67	BB	
Battleford	5.63	VV	14
Mystery	5.60	BB	13
Sunrise	5.57	BB	11.5
Norland	5.55	KC	14
Red Sparkle	5.50	MO	12.5
Rescue	5.47	DE	13
Harrolds	5.47	KF	
Parkland	5.46	MP	11
Rescue	5.35	DB	11
Parkland	5.31	VV	12
Goodland	5.30	MO	12
Collett	5.29	BB	13
Ginger Gold	5.29	BB	11.5
Rosthern 18	5.29	KC	
Centennial	5.27	MO	13
Norson	5.27	DE	12
Norland	5.27	MP	11
Red Transparent	5.25	KF	
Breakey	5.21	BB	14.5
Uralskoe	5.19	DE	14
Nalivnaya			
Parkland	5.18	?	11
Quinte	5.17	BB	12.5
Norland	5.17	KF	
Norland	5.16	DB	12
New York 394	5.15	KF	
Red Duchess	5.09	TM	11
Norland	5.00	DE	16

September Ruby	5.00	BB	13
Parkland	4.96	DE	12
Moose Moore	4.94	MM	15
unknown			
Breakey	4.93	KC	12
Yellow	4.93	KC	12
Transparent			
Yorkshire	4.92	?	
Greening			
Yellow Jay	4.87	BB	15
Westland (?)	4.86	MP	12
Collett	4.86	BB	14
Yellow	4.80	DE	12.5
Transparent			
Norland	4.79	TS	13
Norcue	4.73	DE	11.5
Viking	4.69	KC	12.5
Fifteenth St	4.57		
Mystery			
Ranger	4.54	BB	17
Red Melba	4.33	BB	13
Norhey	4.26	DE	12
Chinese Golden	4.18	KF	
Early			
Redfree	4.15	BB	15
Fiesta	4.13	BB	12
Joyce	4.08	BB	10
Duchess	3.93	TM	12
Westland	3.77	KF	
Geneva Early	3.47	KF	
Westland	3.31	VV	11
Heyer 12	3.20	?	
Tyrus	2.90	BB	10
Iowa Beauty	2.40	BB	11
Suncrisp	2.36	BB	11
Calville Blanc	2.27	BB	10

Sugar Content

Bob and Marianne Boyer tested each variety for sugar content. We were surprised, as we are every year, by some of the winners in this department. Ranger and one sample of Rescue tied for first with a sugar content (measured in brix) of 17. One of the Norlands scored 16.

Nine-Year Results

The next table ranks the Alaskan-grown varieties that have been tasted over the past nine years, since I've been keeping track. The order is subjective, based on number of years in the top ten, and on number of times ranked first, second, or third. This list doesn't change much anymore from one year to the next, because the data have been accumulating for so long. Tom Marshall's Oriole is re-established as our best apple. In contrast, Mantet, Red Duchess, and Viking have each finished first, but they've been around for awhile and have ranked very poorly in other years. State Fair is perhaps the best example of this: it has finished as high as third, but ranked last out of 35 varieties in 2000. When one of these excellent apples scores poorly, it is generally because it isn't ripe.

Every year I mention the same caveat regarding the ranking of Norland and Parkland. These apples have, indeed, finished in the top ten most years, and one or the other has ranked #2 or #3 fairly regularly (this year they finished #15 and #9, respectively). The qualifier is that we usually sample three or four of each, but only the highest-scoring ones make the top-ten list. If other above-average varieties were brought to the tasting in such numbers, they would probably rank a bit higher.

It also bears mentioning that this is a ranking of *eating quality during the last week of September to the first week of October*. This time of year maximizes the number of apples in their prime: any earlier and not enough will be ripe; any later and winter will have set in. A few apples are overripe by this time and don't stand a chance. Chinese Golden Early, if properly thinned for size and picked immediately before tasting, would

probably score quite well in early September, but by the end of September every one in the barrel is brown and mushy. Yellow Transparent and Geneva Early would undoubtedly score better if tasted a few weeks earlier, as would Norland and Parkland.

Variety (in order of rank)	top	1st	2nd	3rd		
	10					
Oriole	7	2	1	2		
Ginger Gold	5	2				
Sept Ruby	4	1	1			
Parkland	9		2	2		
Norland	6		2	1		
Mantet	3	1				
Viking	2	1				
Red Duchess	1	1				
Carroll	2	1	1			
15th	4			1		
Roda Mantet	2		1			
Geneva Early	2		1			
Breaky	1		1			
8th & M mystery	2			1		
State Fair	2			1		
Vista Bella	1			1		
Lodi	2					
Harris	2					

Sunrise	3
Rescue	2
Karl Franke	1
mystery	
Golden	1
Transparent	
Canada Red	1
Arvid Miller	1
mystery	
Whitney	1
Novosibirski Sweet	1
Joyce	1
Red Mantet	1
Pristine	1
Patrick #3	1
Jersey Mac	1
Harolds	1
Goodland	1
Lowland Raspberry	1
Golden Sentenial	1
Sweet Sixteen	1
Stark Ultraspire	1
Garland	1

Featured Fruit

Cranberry

Alaskan Bog Cranberry - *Oxycoccus microcarpus*

A member of the Heath family, this creeping shrub has slender branches and tiny leaves. The flowers resemble miniature shooting stars, while the ruby fruit often appears to be lying on a bed of moss. Prefers mossy peat bogs.

The American Cranberry - *Vaccinium macrocarpon*

This is the best known commercial cranberry, because of its size and juiciness. Also a member of the Heath family, the low lying shrub bears pink flowers that grow into rounded reddish-black berries.

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Cranberry Chutney

A simple and easy uncooked chutney for those of you who like Indian food.

In a blender combine 1/2 cup each of chopped fresh ginger (no need to peel), dried cranberries, and raisins. Add a little water and blend until chunky smooth. Great with chapatis, dahl (lentils), rice, and yogurt cucumber dip.

Steamed Cranberry Pudding

2 c. cranberries
1 1/3 c. flour
1/4 t. cinnamon
1/4 t. mace
1/4 t. cloves
2 t. baking soda

1/2 t. salt
1/3 c. hot water
1/2 c. molasses
1/2 c. butter - softened
2 c. confectioners' sugar
1/4 c. brandy

Mix first 7 ingredients. Combine hot water with molasses and blend into dry mixture. Place into greased pudding mold, cover, and steam for 2 1/2 hours, keeping water level halfway up mold at all times. Cream sugar and butter in a bowl. Add brandy a little at a time while beating. Beat until you have a creamy consistency. Chill before serving. (If you don't want to use alcohol, replace with a couple of teaspoons of vanilla and a little cream or milk) Pour over warm pudding and serve.