

[View this email in your browser](#)



Hello Fruit Growers!

The good news is that a steady stream of low pressure systems flowing into Alaska has maintained mostly cloudy and rainy conditions in Southcentral Alaska. The avoidance of a clearing high-pressure system has limited the drop of nighttime temperatures to only around 30°F. Although the growing degree day (GDD) amounts accumulated each day are down to a trickle (7 GDD/42° F per day), the extra time is allowing some longer season apples to squeak across the finish line.

Simonet (pictured above) is now ready to begin picking with a [brix](#) of 12°. Similarly State Fair and Lee 27 just started to show higher sugar levels last week. The final apple/fruit tasting event of the season is Saturday, October 5 at 1:30 pm at [MidValley Greenhouse](#) in Wasilla. It will be interesting to see what is ripe in time for the tasting. Had a season-ending cold occurred in mid-September, a lot of apple cultivars would have been caught unripe this year.

At the Fruit Tasting on September 21, a number of apples registered a commendable brix of 13°. This group included Carroll, Ft. Mac/Mac, Oriole, Prairie Magic, Kuotesaha, and Trailman. Of those, Carroll, Prairie Magic, and Trailman crab are cultivars recommended by the club as capable of performing well even in poor years depending upon your micro-climate.

Carroll and Prairie Magic are large multi-purpose apples. This year 8 oz apples were not uncommon. Both cultivars achieve high brix and good flavor even if not fully ripe. In addition, both hold their shape when cooked. Prairie Magic is notable for its ability to keep in refrigerated storage and Carroll is one of my favorite apples for drying. Below is a photo of the inaugural drying run of Carroll apples using our new Frigidaire induction range with dehydrator function. You know you are a fruit enthusiast when you select an appliance based on its ability to dry apples!



In September, we held two apple pressing events in both Anchorage and the Valley. Many thanks to Michael Burke and Mark Oathout for making their respective facilities available. And a warm thank you to everyone who helped at the pressings. Members pressed 5,000 lbs of apples between the two events.

Below are the GDD accumulations for September and year-to-date totals for our orchard in East Anchorage with comparisons to the previous two years. Ground temperature at 6” is now averaging 48° F.

Year	September	YTD
2024	280 GDD/42°	2290 GDD/42°
2023	260 GDD/42°	2340 GDD/42°
2022	309 GDD/42°	2639 GDD/42°

Our Prairie Magic and Golden Uralian apple trees are shutting down and moving towards leaf senescence (leaf fall). With the diminishing ground and air temperatures, the remaining trees will no doubt shortly follow. We still have some less than ripe fruit on the trees since we are having a prolonged fall, but there is no expectation of any substantial additional fruit development at this point. Once a severe overnight cold is forecasted, any remaining fruit will come off.

We did our last picking of blueberries this past weekend. The low amount of GDDs this season meant that about 20% of the pollinated berries were still green and left on the plant. This was a bit more of an issue with “Chippewa” which is a larger plant but slightly later to ripen than “Northblue.” To keep a clean growing space, those unripe berries will eventually be removed before the plants wake up next season. Fruit left on plants and trees can be a source of disease the following year.

And a reminder about Fall orchard sanitation. If you had trees with fungal problems (spots on leaves, premature leaf drop, apple scab) be sure to rake up leaves and fallen fruit and remove them from your orchard. Do not compost. The leaves and fruit can provide the inoculum for re-infection next season.

APFGA member Fred Deiser has been planting black currant cultivars that are resistant to the black currant midge. The larva from the midge can cause significant damage to the emerging leaf shoots. In Europe where black currants are a significant crop, there has been a fair amount of research into the problem. You can read more about it in the article, [“Assessment of Infestation of Selected Blackcurrant \(Ribes nigrum L.\) Genotypes by the Blackcurrant Leaf Midge \(Dasineura tetensi Rübs.\) in Poland.”](#) Fred also relayed the information that one of the resistant cultivars in the study “Ben Connan” is available to order from [St. Lawrence Nurseries](#). Email [Fred](#) if you have any questions.

We will hold an APFGA Board of Directors meeting on Wednesday, October 9, at 7:00 pm on Zoom. Members are welcome to attend by clicking the [Zoom link](#). Here are the links to the proposed [agenda](#), previous meeting [minutes](#), and the full [Zoom invitation](#) if needed.

One of the agenda items is to prepare for the November 14 annual membership meeting. Each November, three or four of the seven board of director seats are up for renewal or replacement. Because our 300+ members are located from Fairbanks to Homer and beyond, we will hold the membership meeting on Zoom. If you are interested in serving on the board, or would like more information, please [email me](#) no later than October 30. I will need to set up a poll on Zoom for the membership to vote at our meeting. Because we will hold our meeting and vote on Zoom, nominations from “the floor” are not feasible, thus the call for nominations before the meeting.

Finally, as was mentioned earlier, we will be holding our last fruit tasting of the season at [MidValley Greenhouse](#) in Wasilla at 1:30 pm. The event is free and open to the public. Please invite your friends and neighbors to sample some of the excellent fruit grown locally and now being harvested. It is an easy drive (40 min.) from midtown Anchorage, and I encourage everyone to participate who is within driving range. You are not limited to just bringing fruit. You can bring whatever you do with the fruit that you grow during the summer. Do you make something amazing with your fruit? Well, come share it and let everyone know about the fruit or cultivar that you used that makes it so tasty.



Those bringing fruit or fruit creations should arrive between 1:00 -1:30 pm to set your fruit or food out. There will be numbered paper plates for you to write the variety, your name, and general growing location before putting your fruit on the plate. If bringing apples, please bring 2-3 large apples, 4-6 medium apples, or 6-9 small crabs. Please note on the plate if the fruit was grown in a greenhouse or high tunnel.

If you don’t have your own knife, knives will be provided and tasters (you!) are requested to make thin wedges/slices from pole to pole of the apples when sampling. You will be provided a rating sheet to rate each apple and to make notes. When you have finished tasting, your rating sheet will be scanned and given back to you to take home. The data from the rating sheets will be collated and published on the website.

Pens will be available, but it is helpful if you bring something to write with and if possible, a clip-board. The information you gather concerning what cultivars you liked, who grew it, and where, may help you determine in the spring what to graft and where to source scion wood.

We also need a volunteer or two to take scans or photos of the rating sheets with their phone and to help with inputting the data. If you would be willing to help, please email [Mark Findlay](#).

Hope to see you at MidValley on Saturday!

All the best,

Mark Wolbers
President, APFGA