



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

Look back, but also ahead to next year

When you think about this past year's garden, hopefully you have very few regrets. It is not too early to think about next year's garden. Planning early with a few handy tips will help you have happy memories and choose more successful plants for your garden soil.

FIRST, make a checklist of four simple things:

1. The type of soil in your flowerbeds (sandy, clay, or the ideal loam).
2. The amount of sun and shade the beds get during the day.
3. How dry or wet the beds tend to be.
4. What hardiness zone your garden is in.

SECOND, notice the plants offered for sale at a commercial nursery or garden center. They all have tags with the same information from your checklist on their tags. If the information on the tag matches the information from your garden, the plant will be a success.

INSIST ON A PLANT TAG. If a plant at the nursery is missing its tag, do not buy it. You must have this information for sure in order to make sure that the plant is a fit for your garden. Likewise, if it has a tag saying, "the plant is prone to," don't buy it. It is not worth your trouble.

The plant may overgrow the space you have for it. Notice the size it is supposed to achieve on its tag. Measure the garden space as you plant, to prevent yourself from overplanting your garden.

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PROTECTING YOUR PETS
DR. JERELD RICE

Getting your dogs ready for the hunt

For many people in Northeast Oregon, hunting season is in full swing. Whether your dog is bred for the hunt or is just along for the ride, hunting season can be hazardous. Without appropriate preparation and safety measures, pets can be seriously injured, become sick or even separated from their owners while on hunting trips. The following tips can help keep your dog safe during hunting season.

Before the Hunt

- **Physical Conditioning**

If your dog is a hunting partner, it is vital to ensure that he is in top physical condition. Hunting dogs are oftentimes required to cover long distances in rough country. It's common for dogs to wear their paws thin or even blister the bottoms of their feet if they have not been adequately toughened.

Additionally, dogs that are not sufficiently conditioned are more susceptible to exhaustion and dehydration. Start exercising your dog several months before your planned hunt. Exercising your dog in terrain that is similar to where you will be hunting is the most important thing you can do for your dog before the hunt begins. (Exercise with caution: it's not uncommon for a dog to be hit by a car or 4-wheeler being driven by a well-meaning owner who is "running their dog").

- **Vaccinate**

In order to ensure that your dog is protected against contagious/infectious diseases, make certain he is up to date on his vaccinations.

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All For Apples

By **Daniel Neman**
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

What would happen to a doctor if he ate an apple a day? Would he explode? Would he disappear? Or would he be satisfied knowing he is eating one of nature's greatest gifts?

For any doctor brave enough to try, now is the time to do it. We are at the peak of apple season, and the orchards and markets are laden with America's second most popular fruit (after bananas).

Now is when they are at their freshest and best. The apples you buy next spring and summer will have been picked now, or maybe in the next couple of months, and kept refrigerated until they are sold. And although apples stay fresh and good for a long time, there is no comparison between an apple you buy next June and one you buy now.

The only question is: which variety to get? More than 7,000 varieties of apple grow around the world, with 2,500 types that grow in the United States. Of those, about 100 are grown commercially and find their way to your produce store.

With those guidelines in mind, I made three apple-based dishes — one savory, two sweet. Knowing the right type to use for each dish made them even better.

I began with apple fritters. Then, when that didn't work, I tried apple fritters again. Those were even worse, and took a great deal of time and effort, too.

So I tried a different recipe, one that was much simpler and faster and, as it turns out, far more deliciously successful.

This recipe for fritters takes a very simple dough (no yeast) and adds spices you'd find in apple pie — cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg. It also cooks the apples for several minutes, making them more tender than raw apples but still retaining just the right amount of crunch.

Additional apple flavor comes courtesy of apple cider in the dough, while sweetness is provided by a simple glaze.

For my savory dish, I made pork chops with apple, a favorite recipe I developed a few years ago.

Pork goes with apples like a hug goes with a kiss. To this classic combination, I added sliced onions, caraway seeds and Dijon mustard, all simmered in chicken broth.

No, seriously, it really does taste great. The flavors blend together into a rich and hearty melange that is just the thing on a crisp and chilly night. And it takes mere minutes to make.

For my last dish, I made apple pie — but not your standard, everyday apple pie. I made something special. I made an apple custard pie.

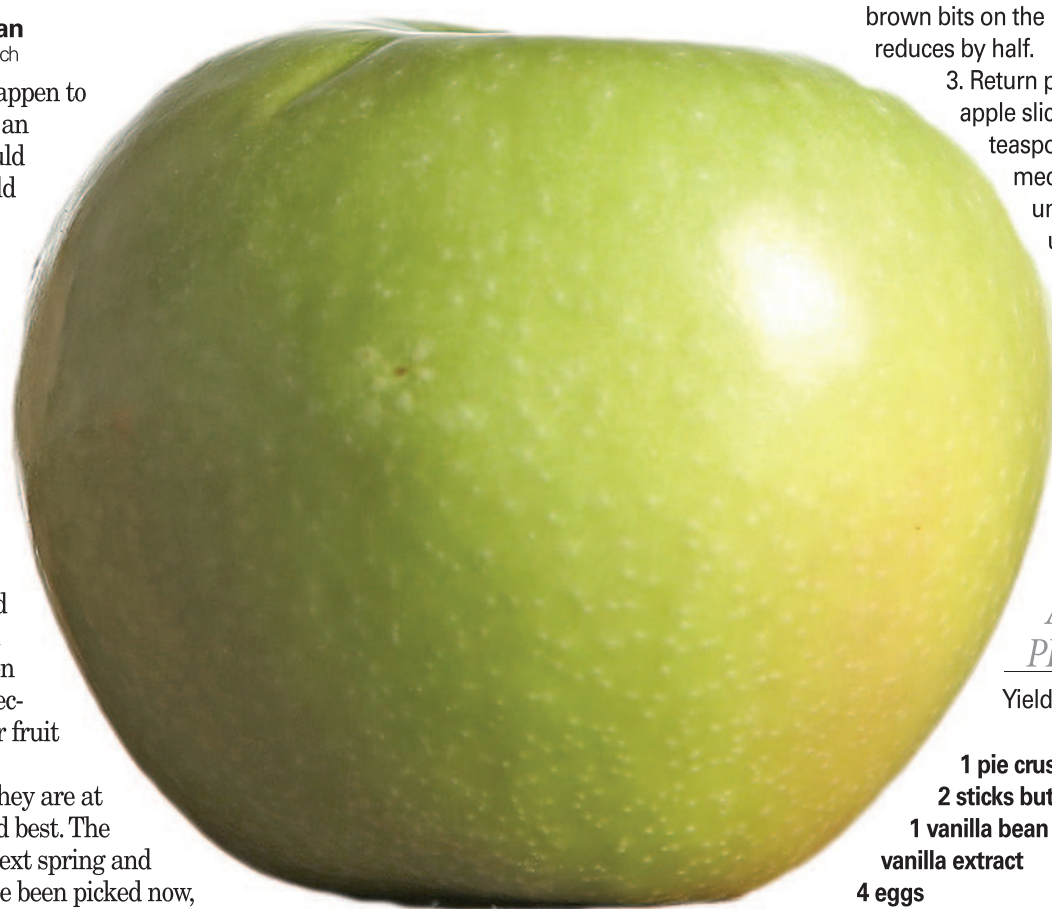
Apple custard pies don't even belong in the same conversation as ordinary apple pies. Apple custard pies are richer, though they don't really taste rich, and are far more elegant than a typical apple pie. The apple flavor does not merely sit there, inert, on the crust; it imbues the whole pie with its essence.

A custard requires eggs, of course, but this custard is special because, instead of cream, it uses melted butter. That's the secret that makes this pie over the top and out of this world.

APPLE FRITTERS

Yield: 12 fritters

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 large Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cut into ¼-inch dice (precision is not required)
- ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon granulated sugar, divided
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger



brown bits on the bottom. Cook until liquid reduces by half.

3. Return pork chops to the pan; add apple slices, caraway seeds and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Reduce heat to medium low, cover and cook until pork is done, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in vinegar, test for seasonings and serve.

Per serving: 273 calories; 17 g fat; 4 g saturated fat; 75 mg cholesterol; 23 g protein; 6 g carbohydrate; 4 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 482 mg sodium; 31 mg calcium

APPLE CUSTARD PIE

Yield: 8 servings

- 1 pie crust
- 2 sticks butter
- 1 vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 3 semi-tart apples, such as Granny Smith, Baldwin, Cortland or Idared

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Pierce inside of pie crust all over with a fork, line with parchment paper or foil and weigh down with pie weights or dry beans. Bake until crust is a light golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Remove pie weights and parchment. Keep the oven on.

2. Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. If using a vanilla bean, split the bean lengthwise with a sharp knife, spread each half open and use the knife to scrape out the seeds from both sides into the melted butter; add the vanilla bean pod halves.

3. Continue to cook, swirling the pan often, until the butter foam subsides and it becomes golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside 10 minutes to cool.

4. Whisk together the eggs, sugar and vanilla extract, if using. If using vanilla bean, remove the pod halves from the butter. Slowly add all the butter to the egg-sugar mixture, whisking constantly. Add the flour and salt and whisk until smooth.

5. Peel and core the apples; slice into ¼-inch slices. Arrange them in a slightly overlapping circle around the edge of the pie crust, with a few slices in the center when the outer ring is complete. This may not take all of the apples. Slowly pour the filling over the apples, giving it time to seep down into the crevasses between the slices. Add enough filling to come within ¼ inch of the top of the crust. This may not take all of the filling.

6. Bake until the apples are a deep golden brown and the filling is set in the center, about 50 minutes to 1 hour. Transfer pie to a wire rack and cool for 2 hours. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Per serving: 518 calories; 32 g fat; 17 g saturated fat; 79 mg cholesterol; 6 g protein; 55 g carbohydrate; 34 g sugar; 3 g fiber; 441 mg sodium; 32 mg calcium

- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- ½ cup apple cider
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon milk

1. In skillet, melt 1 tablespoon butter over medium-high heat and cook until it turns golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Add apples and cook until apples just begin to soften around the edges, 3 to 4 minutes. Sprinkle in 1 tablespoon of the granulated sugar and continue cooking 2 more minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain in a strainer and allow to come to room temperature.

2. Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg; whisk until well-combined. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together egg, the remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar and the 1 tablespoon of melted butter. Stir in the cooled apple pieces and the cider. Add the flour mixture and stir until just incorporated.

3. Heat oil in deep fryer or large saucepan to 350 degrees. Spoon about 2 tablespoons batter per fritter into hot oil, slightly flattening them. Cook in batches, no more than 2 or 3 at a time. Cook until golden brown on bottom and small bubbles appear on top, about 2 minutes. Flip fritters over and fry on the other side until richly browned, about 2 minutes more.

4. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate. Cool slightly before glazing.

5. To make glaze, stir together powdered sugar and milk until smooth and just runny enough to drizzle over the fritters. If too runny, add a little more powdered sugar; if not runny enough, add a little more milk. Use a spoon to drizzle glaze over the fritters.

Per serving: 323 calories; 24 g fat; 4 g saturated fat; 18 mg cholesterol; 2 g protein; 25 g carbohydrate; 14 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 165 mg sodium; 43 mg calcium

— Adapted from *Allrecipes.com*

PORK CHOPS WITH APPLE

Yield: 4 servings

- 4 pork chops
- Salt and pepper
- ½ cup apple cider
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ small onion, sliced thin
- 1 tart apple, such as Jonathan or Granny Smith, sliced
- ¼ teaspoon caraway seeds
- [1 teaspoon (2 pinches) salt
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

1. Season pork chops with salt and pepper. Combine apple cider and chicken broth, and whisk in mustard until thoroughly mixed; set aside.

2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Sear chops until golden brown on both sides; remove to a plate. Add onion and cook, stirring often, for 1 minute. Add the cider mixture and deglaze pan by scraping up any

— Adapted from *Tasting Table*, by *Mika Paredes*

APPLES: PICK YOUR POISON

At this time of year, you're likely to find perhaps a dozen varieties for sale. Which should you pick? What are their best uses?

To help with these questions, food writer Daniel Neman offers this handy guide.

- **Granny Smith** — The tartest of the most commonly available varieties, and also the greenest. It's great for cooking dishes both sweet and savory, and is excellent in salads.

- **Gala** — Sweet and juicy, the Gala is firm enough to stand up to baking and sauteing, but is also great eaten raw.

- **Pink Lady** — Crisp and juicy, with a creamy, custard flavor. Pink Lady is actually a brand name; apple aficionados call it by its real name, Cripps Pink. Good for cooking and great for eating raw.

- **Golden Delicious** — The name is a bit of marketing genius; it is actually not related to the perennially popular Red Delicious. Sweet and mild, with a trace of vanilla, it has a dense texture that makes it particularly suited to baking and pies.

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