

Know the different types of apples to find the best for you



**LIZ
BUCKNER**

Extension Agent

It's that time again!

Another month means another list of in-season fruits and vegetables.

For September that includes: apples, bell pepper, cabbage, cantaloupe, carrot, celery, cucumber, greens, herbs, honeydew, mushroom, onion, orange, peach, squash, sweet potato, tomato, turnip and watermelon.

Also this month means the arrival of autumn, and apples, one of the in-season fruits, become very prominent and beautiful in the produce aisle.

Apples come in all shades of reds, greens and yellows and varieties range in size from a little larger than a cherry to as large as a grapefruit.

While grown in all 50 states with approximately 2,500 varieties grown in the U.S., the top apple producing states are Washington, New York, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Of these home-grown apples, 61 percent are eaten as fresh fruit while 39 percent are processed into apple products such as sauce, juice and cider.

The history of apples usually brings to mind the legendary Johnny Appleseed, and while his contributions in planting orchards throughout the nation were vast and his path through the East and Midwest is today dotted with many monuments honoring his work, apple history has many interesting details.

Archeologists have found evidence that humans have been enjoying apples since 6500 B.C. It is believed the apple tree originated in an area between the Caspian and Black Sea and were a favorite fruit of ancient Greeks and Romans. And with Thanksgiving just around the corner, it is important to note that the pilgrims planted the first apple trees in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

When choosing apples, remember some are best for eating, others are best for cooking, and some varieties are suitable for both.

Popular varieties such as the "Red Delicious," "Golden

Delicious," Winesap," "Rome Beauty" and "Granny Smith" are good examples.

"Red Delicious" apples are easy to identify by the five distinct bumps on the blossom end of each fruit, and their sweet, crisp, juicy, low-acid taste makes them an excellent choice to be eaten raw but not a good choice for cooking.

The "Winesap" apple has a deep red color, a winery and tart taste and is good for eating and cooking but not satisfactory for baking.

The "Rome Beauty" apples have a mild flavor that is best savored after cooking or baking.

The "Granny Smith" apples are available most of the year and are firm and tart with a freckled green skin. They are excellent for eating and cooking and are often specified in pie recipes because they hold their shape and flavor when cooked.

Despite the variety you take home, remember to choose firm apples free of bruises, decay, broken or shriveled skin.

Regarding nutrition, apples are delicious, easy to carry for a snack, low in calories, a natural mouth freshener, sources of vitamin A and C, thiamin, iron, calcium and fiber.

Regarding consumer economics, the apple also makes for an inexpensive snack.

Due to many variables such as moisture content, size and variety, specific yield equivalents as to quantities to purchase are difficult to estimate, but approximately one pound equals three medium apples, one pound equals 1 1/2 cups applesauce, and 2 pounds (6-8 apples) equals a 9-inch pie plate.

One final interesting note in the event an "Apple Bobbing Contest" is in your schedule for an Autumn Harvest Festival or you want to have an advantage the next time playing trivia, 25 percent of an apple's volume is air. Hence, that is why they float.

Remember there is an apple available to suit almost everyone's taste, so have an apple today.

For an apple and pear recipe flyer or a traditional apple pie recipe, please contact the extension office at 903-657-0376.