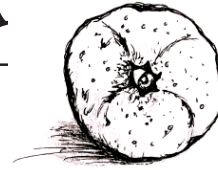




Fruit Box

I wear myself out trying to render the orange trees so that they're not stiff but like those I saw by Botticelli in Florence. It's a dream that won't come true.

~Berthe Morisot



Box Contents

To be eaten first

Jonagold Apples
Fuji Apples
Red Globe Grapes
Gold Pineapple
Valencia Oranges

May need ripening...

Luscious Pears
Flavor Rich Pluots

Ethylene Table (see 6th delivery NL for details)

EP: Ethylene Producer
ES: Ethylene Sensitive
EN: Ethylene Neutral

Ripening and Storage Techniques

Jonagold Apples (EP) are grown by Columbia Gorge in Hood River, OR. The name of this brilliant golden-red apple reflects its parentage of Golden Delicious and Jonathan. It has the tart-sweetness of the Jonathan and juicy, crispness in texture of the Golden. It is best to keep apples as cold as possible, so store them in the back of your refrigerator. Apples can last up to six weeks in the refrigerator.

Fuji Apples (EP) are grown by Ferrari Farm in CA. Fuji apples are the most extensively planted apple variety worldwide. Crossing the Red Delicious with the Ralls Janet resulted in the Fuji. It has a yellow green color with red highlights to mostly red, outstanding juiciness, a crisp texture, and a complex sweet but tart taste giving it a wonderful flavor. See Jonagold Apples for storage information.

Red Globe Grapes (seeded, EN) are grown by John France near Porterville, CA. Red Globe variety is a very large grape, with crisp texture, large seeds, and good flavor. Rick from Coop partners says the grapes are beautiful and tasty. He told me that grape seeds are a great source of antioxidants. The fact the seedless grapes have taken over the marketplace doesn't mean that we have to ignore the older "true fruit" varieties (on many levels, fruit should have seeds after all). These grapes will store for up to 7 days in cold storage.

Gold Pineapples (EN) are from an organic grower in Costa Rica. Early Spanish explorers named this fruit pina because it is shaped like a pine cone. Pineapples are picked ripe (they do not ripen after picking) and should be covered with a plastic bag to prevent moisture loss and stored in a refrigerator. Store pineapples close to the door since they are best at a temperature around 45° F. Pineapples stored correctly will last days in the refrigerator.

Valencia Oranges (EN) are grown by Eco Farm in CA. Valencias are thin-skinned, nearly seedless, and excellent juicers whose juice doesn't lose its vitamin C overnight. Store oranges in a cool place outside the refrigerator and try to eat them within a few days. If you need to keep them longer, refrigerate in a plastic bag or in the vegetable crisper section.

Luscious Pears (Locally grown; EP) are grown by Future Fruit Farm in WI. Leave them out at room temperature and they will ripen in a few days to a week, depending on the maturity when delivered. The Luscious Pear is a cross-parentage pear that is very sweet and aromatic with a hint of butterscotch and honey. If you choose to hold off the ripening process, the fruit should be refrigerated and will hold three to four weeks there until ready to ripen. Once ripe, a pear will not last much more than a couple of days, even in the refrigerator.

Flavor Rich Pluots (EP) are grown by Twin Girls farm in CA. Pluots are a hybrid of a plum and an apricot and mainly retain the characteristics of a plum. Their skin is a light reddish-yellow color with some speckling. This fruit has one of the highest Brix level readings on a refractometer, meaning that it has a very sweet taste. Keep at 65-70 degrees for the most ideal ripening conditions.

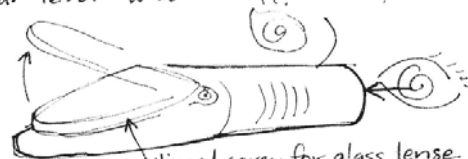
10th Delivery

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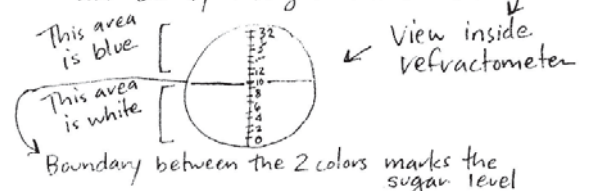
early October

REFRACTOMETER

LENSE - this is an instrument to measure sugar level - which is measured by a unit called "BRIX"



Hinged cover for glass lense - juice is put under the cover, on top of lense, then we hold lense up to the sunlight and look through the chamber - the light refracts through the sugar, giving a redding we can see by looking in the chamber



Grower Profile

This grower profile is excerpted from *Melissa's Magazine*.
For the complete article go to
http://www.melissas.com/magazine/index.cfm?article_id=710



The Hood River Valley of Oregon is not only a fertile agricultural area, producing the largest Anjou pear harvest in the world; it is also a picture postcard of scenic beauty. A

35-mile carpet of orchards gradually climbs up a narrow valley from the banks of the Columbia River and the Town of Hood River, to the foothills of majestic Mt. Hood, a snow-capped volcano that has been hibernating for more than 200 years.

About mid-way up this scenic wonderland is the COLUMBIA GORGE ORGANIC FRUIT COMPANY. The Stewart family – sons Ronny, Jimmy and mom Cheryl – tend approximately 180 organic acres of apples, pears, cherries, peaches, nectarines and plums. The volume of fresh fruit produced by this family farm has also generated the need for a supporting on-site fruit processing facility as well as a high-volume composting operation to feed it all. Each family member runs one aspect of this diversified farm. The energy level, despite the peaceful pastoral backdrop here, smashes all laid-back-farmer stereotypes. After five minutes on the property one finds it necessary to move a little quicker and talk a little faster, just to keep pace with this trio of high-energy producers. The family seems to work as a unit, yet separately, all at the same time; each attending to a parade of never-ending issues that occur by the minute in this multi-faceted operation.

The family's approach to farming is summed up with four words: Compost, Farm, Fruit and Juice. First, the Stewarts believe their fruit trees "are what they eat", so they avoid commercial composts by also managing their own facility that produces almost 100 tons annually of the highest quality humus. They apply this to their orchards along with volcanic ash from nearby Mt. Hood, which is rich in minerals and micro-nutrients. Going one step further, a compost tea is made with molasses, kelp, and local rock powders. This recipe is brewed in an aerobic environment in which only beneficial microbes and bacteria are grown. The brew is then used as a foliar (leaf) spray with fungicidal properties. The result has been the elimination of copper and sulfur use in the orchard while still being

able to control apple and pear scab, mildew and peach leaf curl – some of the fruit grower's most persistent natural enemies.

The fresh marketplace has eye-appeal criteria that disqualify a percentage of every harvest from the grocery store display racks. To dispose of fruit that cannot be sold at retail, most growers rely on the fruit processing industry to turn their lower quality production into juice and canned goods. However the Stewarts, who have always found opportunity at every level of farming, prefer to keep control of their own fruit from orchard to fork or through a straw, if that is another way to distribute their bounty. One case in point: instead of selling their culls for pennies-per-pound to an outside fruit processor, Columbia Gorge Organic has developed its own line of juice and smoothie products, which they distribute throughout the Pacific Northwest and Northern California. The company also has recently begun production of canned apricot halves, peach halves,

pear halves and pitted cherries. Both juice and canned products are all produced by their own on-site U.S.D.A. approved facilities.

This processing capability not only keeps more profit on the premises, it also affects the quality of the farm's retail pack. "Since every piece of fruit goes into the making of some Columbia Gorge product, we can be very fussy about what ends up in our box of fresh fruit" said Ronnie Stewart. "We can afford to use

only the very best fruit for our fresh pack, because we can use all the culls we can get to support our successful canned and juice products" added brother Jimmy as he showed off the state-of-the-art pasteurizing room built for the juice and smoothie product lines.

Despite these many accomplishments, there is never a sense of completion at Columbia George. There has always been a new project or new vision to pursue since Patriarch Ron Stewart, who passed away suddenly in 2003, escaped from the dry-cleaning business in California in 1975 to purchase 80 acres of orchard without a clue which end of a tractor was the front. His passion and approach is carried on by his sons and widow, who have continued to operate and grow this full-service farm into the diverse operation that it is today. Whether it is new fruit varieties to experiment with or new juice flavors, they always strive for perfection. Their curiosity and willingness to experiment has kept this family farm vibrant and continually on the cutting edge of organic agriculture

