



Growing Cherries

and Thoughts About Other Fruits

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This booklet centers on cherries, but I will share some thoughts about other fruits and about fruit-growing opportunities on Martha's Vineyard more generally. I draw upon my experience in Oak Bluffs, where in the winter of 1990–91 I acquired a small property that turned out to have a few fruit trees, which I have gradually expanded to more than 40 as well as berry bushes.

I have become a fruit nut.



This booklet follows a presentation made to the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club on 19 July 2022.



Mr. Norris watching over the orchard.

Acknowledgments

Color paintings by Marilena Pistoia, from *I Frutti della terra* (Verona, Arnoldo Mondadori, 1973).

Thanks to Joe and Jon Fragosa for skill and help caring for the orchard.

Thanks to Susan Child for early suggestions

Thanks to editor H. Dale Langford.

On the cover

Fruit medley: persimmons, red and white grapes, quince, pears, apples, beach plums, choke cherries, boysenberries, figs, rose hips.



Some fruit definitions

Fruit is the seed-bearing product of a plant. When derived from a transformation of the ovary, the result is called a *true fruit*. See *Figure 1*.

When other parts are also involved, e.g., receptacle, sepals, petals, bracts, the result is known botanically as a *false fruit* or *pseudocarp*. (The ancient Greek for fruit is *karpós*, which becomes “carp” in several modern fruit-related words.)

False fruit range from the strawberry to the apple, pear, guava, banana, fig, cucumber, eggplant, and pineapple. Apple is a fruit that grows from the thalamus present on the flowers, rather than the ovary.

Fruits form into three main anatomical categories: *simple fruits*, *aggregate fruits*, and *multiple fruits*. Simple fruits result from ripening-to-fruit of a simple or compound ovary in a single flower with a single pistil. Simple fruits may be *fleshy* like cherries, olives, and mangoes, or *dry* like walnuts and cereal grains.

Aggregate fruits form from a single compound flower and contain many ovaries or fruitlets. Examples include raspberries and blackberries.

Multiple fruits form from the fused ovaries of multiple flowers or inflorescence. Examples include fig, mulberry, and pineapple.

During development, the *pericarp* (ovary wall) and other accessory structures become the fleshy portion of the fruit. See *Figure 2*.

The *epicarp* or *exocarp* is the outer layer of the pericarp, often different in texture from the rest.

The *mesocarp* is the middle layer of the fruit wall.

The *endocarp* is the inner layer of the pericarp, that is, the fruit wall, often different in texture, sometimes cartilaginous, as in an apple.

The types of fleshy fruits are *pomes*, *drupes*, and *berries*. See *Figure 3*.

A *pome* is a fleshy fruit with a paper endocarp forming a core with several seeds, e.g., apples, pears, and quinces.

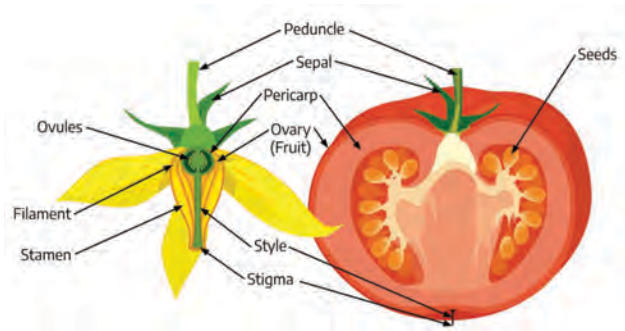


Figure 1. The transformation of the tomato, a true fruit.

Source: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/app/uploads/sites/276/2021/06/8.1-Tomato-flower-fruit.jpg>

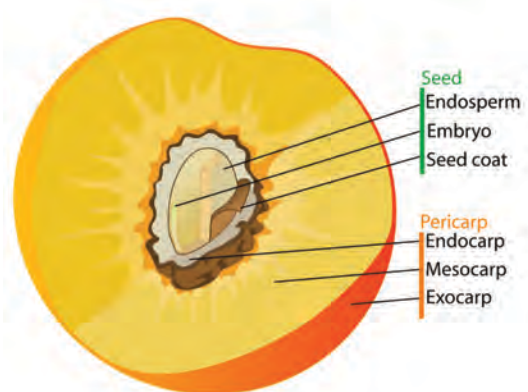


Figure 2. Diagram of a typical **drupe** (peach), showing both fruit and seed.

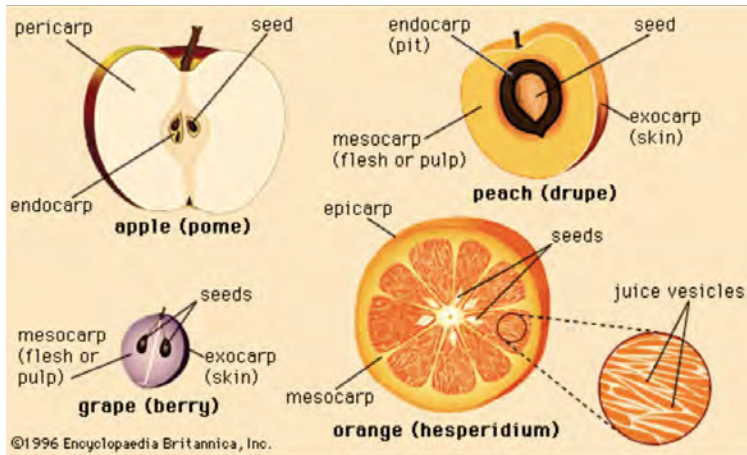


Figure 3. Types of fleshy fruits. **drupes:** cherry, peach, apricot, plum, mango, coconut, avocado. **pomes:** apples, pears, quince. **berries:** tomatoes, kiwi, watermelon, gourds, citrus, banana. **hesperidium:** citrus.

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

A *drupe* is a fruit with a hard kernel and a fleshy pericarp, as in cherry, peach, apricot, plum, mango, coconut, avocado. The stony endocarp is commonly known as a pit. Some cultivars are *freestone*, where the pit is easy to remove, and some are *cling*, where the flesh attaches strongly to the stone or pit.

A *berry* is a fleshy fruit that does not open, containing seeds. It usually has a fleshy or pulpy pericarp, for example, grapes, gooseberries, cranberries, and tomatoes. Or, more exotically, kiwi and dragon fruit.

Watermelons are berries on steroids. Gourds are also berries. So are lemons and other citrus. The banana is a leathery berry whose seeds are bred nearly out of existence.

More fruit definitions

A **pepo** is a many-seeded, fleshy fruit with a hard *inseparable rind*, e.g., watermelon, squash, cucumber.

A **hesperidium** is a fruit structured like an orange, pulpy within and with a leathery *separable rind*.

Dehiscent fruits open or split at maturity to discharge seeds.

Indehiscent fruits do not open in a definite manner when ripe to release seeds.

A **nut** is a hard, indehiscent fruit usually containing one seed only, e.g., acorn, hazelnut.

Fleshy fruits depend on animals to eat the fruits and *disperse the seeds* in order for their populations to survive.

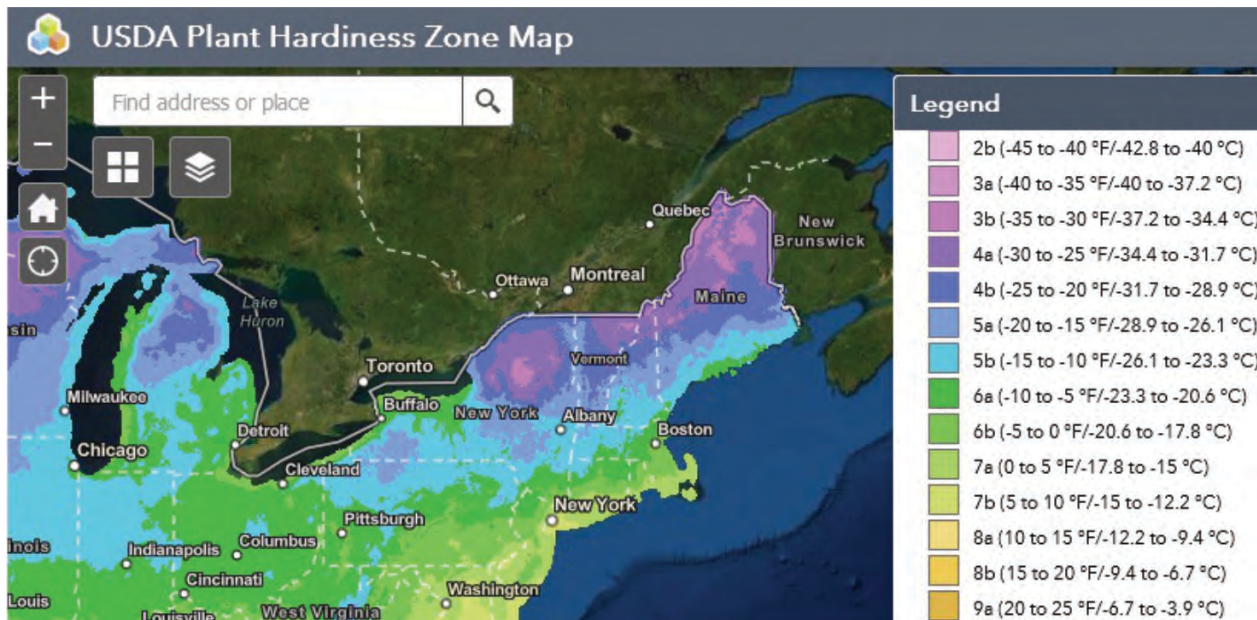
Dry fruits depend more on physical forces, like wind and water; dry fruits' seeds can also perform pod shattering.

The actual pollination of fruits can be highly specialized and complex. One could have a whole lecture on fig sex, which depends on wasps.

In short, fruit has a wonderful complexity, variety, and vocabulary.

Fig sex in cross section. The receptacle forms a hollow chamber, the inner wall of which is covered by rufous florets. Their long and curled white styles occupy the center. Each floret can produce a fruit and seed. The green, bract-lined ostiole, bottom, admits wasp pollinators. This figure depicts the enclosure with tens to thousands of fruits within it.





Before turning to cherries, a word about climate or plant **hardiness zones**, revised by the US Department of Agriculture every decade or two. Here you see the most recent 2012 Hardiness Zone map, based on average minimum winter temperature. Southeastern Massachusetts is actually quite mild, zone 7A, which means we very rarely go below zero Fahrenheit.

The 2012 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The map is based on average annual minimum winter temperature, divided into 10-degree F zones.

Source: <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>

Cherries

The cherry, a true fruit and a drupe, comes in two species, sweet and sour, each of which in turn has many varieties. The sweet cherry, *Prunus avium*, is a deciduous tree growing to about 15–30 meters (50–100 ft) tall, with a trunk up to 1.5 m (5 ft) in diameter. Young trees show strong apical dominance with a straight trunk and symmetrical conical crown, becoming rounded to irregular on old trees.

In the United States, most sweet cherries are grown in Washington, California, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Important sweet cherry cultivars include Bing, Ulster, Rainier, Brooks, Tulare, King, and Sweetheart. Both Oregon and Michigan provide light-colored 'Royal Ann' (alternately 'Queen Anne') cherries for the maraschino cherry process.

Smaller than the sweet cherry, the sour or tart cherry tree (*Prunus cerasus*) grows to a height of 4–10 m (12–30 ft), has



Jesse's sour (Montmorency) cherries.

twiggy branches, and its cherries are borne upon shorter stalks. There are two main sour cherry varieties (groups of cultivars): the dark-red Morello cherry and the lighter-red Amarelle cherry.

Most US sour cherries are grown in Michigan, followed by Utah, New York, and Washington. Sour cherries include ‘Nanking’ and ‘Evans’. Montmorency is the varietal most commonly grown in the US and Canada on small family farms. The name comes from a valley in the northern suburbs of Paris, France, where tart cherries were first cultivated in the 18th century. Canard à la Montmorency is a famous dish of duck with sour cherries; more about cooking later.

Tables 1 and *2* show 2020 world cherry production, which differs between sweet, where relatively warm temperate climates dominate, and sour where cooler temperate climates dominate. Turkey, which is believed to be the place of origin of cherries, produces about one-third of the world’s cherry tonnage.

Table 1. Top sweet cherry producing nations in 2020 (thousand tons)

Rank	Country	Production
1	Turkey	724
2	United States	294
3	Chile	255
4	Uzbekistan	185
5	Iran	164
6	Italy	104
7	Greece	93
8	Spain	82
9	Ukraine	63
10	Bulgaria	52
	World	2,609

Source: UN Food & Agriculture Organization

Table 2. Top sour cherry producing nations in 2020 (thousand tons)

Rank	Country	Production
1	Russia	254
2	Turkey	189
3	Ukraine	174
4	Serbia	165
5	Poland	153
6	Iran	121
7	Uzbekistan	70
8	United States	63
9	Hungary	61
10	Belarus	53
	World	1,479

Traverse City in northwest Michigan, proudly calls itself the “Cherry Capital of the World,” hosting a National Cherry Festival and making the world’s largest cherry pie.

More than 90 percent of Montmorency tart cherries consumed in the US are grown in the US. In fact, two-thirds of the US Montmorency tart cherries are grown in Michigan. If you ate cherry pie on the 4th of July, you likely ate Michigan cherries.

Utah, Washington, New York, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania are other prominent Montmorency tart cherry-producing states.



Figure 4. Some varieties of cherries. **Left**, clockwise from top: Japanese yellow cherries, rainbow stripe, Vignola I, Vignola black, starking Hardy giant, marchiana, and early Bourlat. **Right**, counterclockwise from top: red morellos, black morellos, section of red morello, and wild cherries. Paintings by Marilena Pistoia.

Tasty varieties of sour cherries abound, as the beautiful paintings by the late great botanical artist Marilena Pistoia show (*Figure 4*). Truly one would like to have a tree with each of these varieties in one’s garden. Think of standing under a tree decorated with hundreds of each of these edible ornaments, and popping them into your mouth in the late afternoon sun.

My focus here is on Montmorency, a self-fertile variety, which means you can grow it without other cherry varieties in the area for pollination. However, you will get more fruit if you include another pollinator in your yard. In *Figure 5* you see Loretta Ryerson, daughter of The Sweet Life chef helping her father Hal harvest some Montmorency in my yard. Montmorency trees grow at a medium rate, with height increases of one to two feet per year. Sour cherry bark is brown-red, spotted, and in time comes off in transversal strips.



Figure 5. Loretta and Hal Ryerson harvest Montmorency. **Photos:** Tina Miller

How long do Montmorency cherry trees live? The site TreeHelp.com says the typical lifespan of a cherry tree is as short as 16 to 20 years. However, some of mine are 40 years old. It typically takes 3–5 years for a cherry tree to bear fruit.

Sour cherries like a colder winter than Martha's Vineyard. They reportedly grow best in USDA Hardiness Zones 4 to 6, while we are 7. Most cherry varieties have a chilling requirement of 800 or more hours, meaning that in order to break dormancy, blossom, and set fruit, the winter season needs to have at least 800 hours when the temperature is below 45 °F (7 °C).

Picking is a joy. It's a special feeling to be surrounded by cherries.

Sour cherry trees will yield approximately 15–20 quarts for dwarf trees, and 20–60 quarts for larger trees.

The sweet cherries I have tried to grow suffered pest problems, and also birds ate all the ripe ones. In contrast, I have a good relationship with bluebirds, cardinals, and other birds that like the sour cherries—they eat some but not too many and mostly from the tops of the trees where it is hard to harvest.

It helps to prune about 10 percent of the limbs each winter to increase sunlight to the center of the tree and to encourage new growth, which in turn will produce more fruit. It also helps to cut damaged, older, and the least-productive stems back from where they originate, using pruning shears, loppers, or a pruning saw.



Marthe and Craig Barton after picking.

Cherry diseases

The cherry can be a difficult fruit tree to grow and keep alive. Pests and diseases do attack. The first visible pest in the growing season soon after blossom can be the black cherry aphid ("cherry blackfly," *Myzus cerasi*), which causes leaves at the tips of branches to curl, with the blackfly colonies exuding a sticky secretion which promotes fungal growth on the leaves and fruit. At the fruiting stage in June/July, the cherry fruit fly (*Rhagoletis cingulata* and *Rhagoletis cerasi*) lays its eggs in the immature fruit, whereafter its larvae feed on the cherry flesh and exit through small holes (about 1 mm diameter), which in turn are the entry point for fungal infection of the cherry fruit after rainfall.

Other pests that damage cherry trees include *Lyonetia clerkella*, often called the Apple Leaf Mining Moth, and leaf-cutter ants (*Figure 6*).

How do you treat cherry trees for bugs? Insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils can be effective for aphid treatment. In mild cases, you can wipe the infected leaves of your cherry tree with diluted dish washing soap mixed with water. Introducing beneficial insects like ladybugs can reduce aphids. To prevent maggots from appearing inside the fruit (the larvae of cherry fruit fly), the tree must be thoroughly sprayed with a labeled insecticide when the adults emerge and before the females lay their eggs inside the young fruit.

In addition, cherry trees are susceptible to bacterial canker, cytospora canker, brown rot of the fruit (*Monilinia laxa*), root rot from overly wet soil, crown rot, and several viruses.

Cherry leaf spot, caused by the fungus *Blumeriella jaapii*, attacks the leaves, leaf stems, fruit, and fruit stems of tart and sweet cherries. The disease first emerges on upper sides of leaves as tiny, red to purple, circular spots.

For fungal problems, one treats cherry trees with a liquid copper concentrate, beginning as the buds swell.

Sour cherries suffer fewer pests and diseases than sweet cherries, although they are still prone to losses from birds. Unlike most sweet cherry varieties, sour cherries are self-fertile or self-pollenating.

While birds tax the harvest, as mentioned, I have never protected my cherries with netting, though I do net some of the other fruits. Netting a mature cherry tree would require a lot of net and interfere with the natural cycle of birds seeding new trees, and I do dream that my yard will spawn cherry forests around the Island.

Cherry habitat

Sour cherries share similar cultivation requirements with pears, that is, they prefer a rich, well-drained, moist soil, although pears demand more nitrogen and water than cherries. Trees will do badly if waterlogged, but sour cherries have greater tolerance of poor drainage than sweet varieties. Many cherries, as Morellos, are traditionally cultivated by budding onto strong growing rootstocks.

When a cherry tree is at the end of its life, its value is not yet exhausted. Woodworkers prize the hard reddish-brown



Figure 6. Leaves may be eaten by birds or by leaf cutters or other insects, and lichen may grow on older trees.



Cherry leaf roll virus is present in old orchards. Symptoms vary. On the leaves may appear ring spots, marginal redness, or twists. Usually, the disease leads to stagnation in sprouts growth. If the attack is strong, the main characteristic leaf twist. The virus is transmitted through grafting, seed, and pollen.



Jesse picking cherries, encouraging birds.



Figure 7. 1903 cast iron cherry stoner.

cherry wood for its rich color and straight grain in manufacturing fine furniture, particularly desks, tables, chairs, and musical instruments. Cherry wood is also used for smoking foods, particularly meats, in North America, as it lends a distinct and pleasant flavor to the product.

Speaking of foods, I share an image of a handsome cast iron cherry stoner from 1903 (*Figure 7*). Unfortunately, my experience with this and other devices is that they tend to crush the flesh. Fingers and a small knife keep cherries best intact although pitting quarts by hand is tedious. Houseguests tend to be either very slow or brutal.



Cherry cuisine

Although they are a dessert, pies naturally exemplify cherry cuisine. Sour cherries shamelessly ripen in Oak Bluffs around the 4th of July, in time for brilliant red pies. Paired with vanilla ice cream and a blueberry pie, they wave red, white, and blue.

The phrase *easy as pie* is misleading, I feel. Attractive pies with tasty, flaky crust require careful timing and skillful handling, while most cakes, at least cherry cakes, are quite foolproof. In *Figure 8* you see on the left, made by my niece Ramona, a showy cherry olive oil cake, a sort of upside-down cake. Whole cherries freeze perfectly. On the right are cherry-rich fruitcakes made around Christmas, great with tea or egg nog.

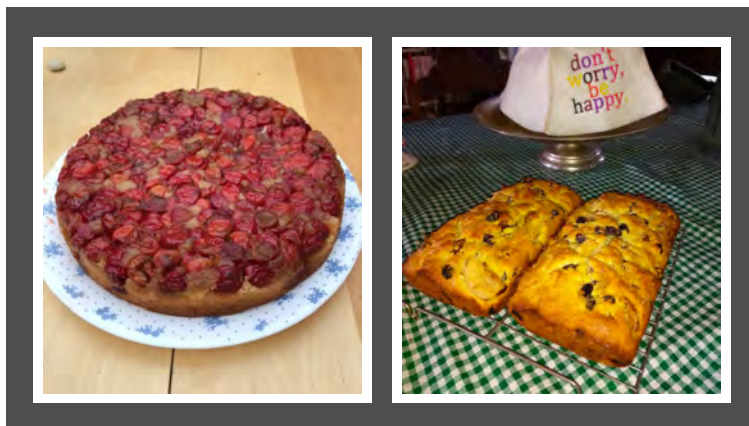


Figure 8. Cherry cakes.

Many of you probably enjoy cold soups such as gazpacho and vichyssoise. Equally refreshing and beautiful is sour cherry soup, a slightly sweet soup made with whole fresh pitted sour cherries and cherry juice, sour or fresh cream or kefir, a little sugar, sometimes a little clove or cinnamon, served chilled (*Figure 9*). Some chefs add a small amount of sweet white or dry red wine before serving. Originating in Hungarian cuisine, this soup is a summer delicacy in several European cuisines. Hungarians call sour cherry soup “meggyleves” from meggy meaning “sour-cherries,” and leves meaning “soup.” Hungarians traditionally serve meggyleves as a dinner course as an appetizer on warm summer nights or for hot summer luncheons. Sour cherry trees abound in Hungary, and the soup exemplifies the Hungarian fusion of Eastern/Asian influences and traditional Continental European cuisine.



At The Sweet Life Cafe in Oak Bluffs, Hal Ryerson serves a delicious polenta cake with cherry compote and whipped mascarpone.

Photo: Tina Miller



Figure 9. Hungarian cold cherry soups. Left, Photo source: <https://cultureatiz.com/sour-cherry-soup> Right, Recipe at New York Times: <https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1013699-cold-cherry-soup>

Sour cherries go well with canard à la Montmorency, mentioned earlier, and with several other meats in addition to duck. Pork roasted with sour cherries is mouth-watering. Cold salmon roasted and dressed with sour cherries and a little orange tastes as marvelous as it looks (*Figure 10*).

Cherries of course are also preserved and candied, mostly famously the Maraschino, and used to make spirits. About 10 kilos (or 22 lb.) of cherries make 1 liter (1 quart) of brandy or Kirsch.



Figure 10. Cold salmon à la Montmorency. Poached in cherry juice and garnished with cherries and orange.



Cherry blossoms

Horticulturists have bred many varieties of cherry for their flowers rather than their fruits. A cherry blossom known as Japanese cherry or Sakura is a variety of *Prunus cerasus*. Especially common and beloved in China, Korea, and Japan, they generally refer to ornamental cherry trees, not to be confused with cherry trees that produce fruit for eating. The village of Woods Hole has a stunning set of ornamental cherry trees. The fruiting cherries have lovely white flowers but less flamboyant than the Sakura.



Other fruits of the Vineyard

Quince

Let me offer a few words about each of several other fruits in my orchard, particularly less common ones, beginning with quince, *Cydonia oblonga*. A pome and a false fruit closely related to apples and pears, quince is a shrub or small tree that can reach 12–20 ft in height, with a contorted trunk, ovate leaves cottony on the lower surface. Flowers are white or light pink. Quince, even at the end of October when fully ripe and have turned from green to bright yellow and very fragrant, are inedible raw but are very good for cooking and preserves.



Figure 11. Blue ribbon for quince at the Ag Fair. The fruit is still covered with grayish coating that is easily rubbed off.

My green mid-August quince, less than half the size they may attain and still glaucous, have several times earned blue ribbons at the Agricultural Fair (*Figure 11*). Quince allow me to introduce two

of my favorite fruit words. The first is *campanulate*, meaning bell-shaped, as in *campanile*, an Italian bell-tower.

The second is *marmalade*, which first appeared in the English language about 1480, borrowed from French *marmelade* which, in turn, came from the Galician-Portuguese word *marmelada*. In Galician-Portuguese *marmelo* is “quince,” probably meaning sea apple. In Portugal, *marmelada* is a preserve made from quince, often with orange added. The Portuguese also make delicious quince paste, *membrillo*. With its Portuguese and Azorean heritage, Martha’s Vineyard ought to become more serious about quince and marmalade and *membrillo*.

Persimmon

Persimmon, *Diopyros kaki*, originated in mountainous regions of central and eastern China, and its cultivation there and in Japan goes back to ancient times. Japan grows about 1,000 varieties. Persimmon does not need special soil; it can grow on dry, sandy, or limestone soils. The trees can reach 30 feet high and are in the same genus as trees that provide ebony wood.

Persimmon fruits, which are berries with a smooth skin ranging in color from reddish to orange-yellow, ripen at the end of fall, November here. At the approach of winter, persimmons with their beautiful bright colors can still be seen hanging from already leafless branches. They should be eaten when fully ripe, soft, watery, and sweet, and all tannic traces have disappeared.



Above: Several persimmon varieties. Below: Persimmon in summer.

Pomegranate

The pomegranate, *Punica granatum*, is a shrub or small, profusely branched tree, at most about 15 feet tall. The flowers are bright orange-red. The morphology of the fruit is peculiar. It is a spherical berry, the size of an orange or small grapefruit, with a smooth coriaceous skin ranging from yellowish to purple reddish. The inside is divided by septa into small irregular cells containing many polyhedral seeds, whose outside flesh is gelatinous



Admiring pomegranate flowers.



Figure 12. Pomegranate: a painter’s fruit, symbol of fertility and the sacred heart.
From left to right: Fra Angelico, Prado, Madrid; Lorenzo di Credi, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Workshop of Botticelli, National Gallery, London; Botticelli, Uffizi, Florence.

while the inside is woody. Pomegranate is of course the source of a delicious red syrup, grenadine.

Probably native to Persia, the pomegranate has always been connected with religious ceremonies, during which both the flowers and the fruits were used. Its numerous seeds easily associate with fertility. Ripening even after quince and persimmon, and preserving well, Christian iconography associates pomegranates with Christmas. Numerous great Renaissance painters chose the pomegranate as a subject, suggesting both fertility and also the sacred heart and blood of Christ (*Figure 12*).

Currants and gooseberries

Now to red and black currants, *Ribes rubrum* and *Ribes nigrum*, respectively, and gooseberry, *Ribes grossularia*, all Saxifragaceae, all small shrubs. Red currants are permitted in Massachusetts. The red, semitransparent berries taste pleasantly sour. In parts of the US, including Massachusetts, black currants are alas associated with a pine disease that can decimate forests. Black currants produce the wonderful liqueur cassis. One could sell Vineyard Cassis for a very high price at the Farmer’s Market. Let’s hope the pine disease problem gets solved.



◀ 2022 Norris gooseberries.

Figure 13. Maquereaux aux groseilles – mackerel with gooseberry, lime and chili – Tangy fruit and oily fish go together.

Photo source: <https://www.independent.co.uk>



Fortunately, Islanders can grow gooseberries, a sourer fruit than the currant, of variable size, green, yellow, white, or red, with juicy flesh. For reasons I do not understand the gooseberry has become less common and popular during my lifetime. Part of the decline may associate with the loss of appetite for mackerel; Portuguese and French traditionally ate mackerel with gooseberry sauce (*Figure 13*).

Peaches

After cherries, the most ecstatic fruit tree is probably the peach, *Prunus persica vulgaris*, a true fruit, a drupe of spheroidal shape, with a longitudinal groove. The pedicel attaches to the fruit at the bottom of a rather deep cavity. Depending on the variety, of which 5,000 may exist, the fruits are shades of yellow, orange, or red. The US and Italy produce the most peaches. The flesh, fragrant and sweet, is, I think, best enjoyed at dawn. I personally think the snake should have offered Eve a ripe peach.

In a good peach year, it's great to invite friends over to enjoy peaches at the height of ripeness. Peaches always look like they want to be entered into the Fair (*Figure 14*).



Figure 14. Friends and prize-winning peaches at Norris Avenue.

Apples

No discussion of fruit on Martha's Vineyard could omit apples, *Malus communis*, a pome as noted at the outset. Apples tend to be the bread-and-butter of most Northeast orchards. They produce joyful spring blossoms and



abundant harvests. The trees are strong; I have a swing on the branch of one of my apple trees. And they are a versatile fruit easy to preserve, for which clever gadgets exist, such as Mrs. Anderson's Triple-Action apple machine that slices, peels, and cores (*Figure 15*).



Figure 15. The apple machine that slices, peels, and cores.



Apple harvesting gives a great sense of accomplishment, even to children. Apples mark a transition from the summer fruits—cherries, peaches, plums, pears, figs—to autumn. Apples follow the grapes in September but precede the quince, persimmons, and I hope eventually, pomegranates.

Cooks are rarely happier than with a basket of apples, and their products kept cool, dried, juiced, preserved, or frozen can last all the way to the next summer.

Hazelnuts

Before wrapping up, let me say a little about nuts, which are also fruits after all. The hazelnut, *Corylus avellana*, grows successfully in West Tisbury, and I am trying to grow one in Oak Bluffs. The small trees, 6–15 feet high with spreading heads, make beautiful low forests (*Figure 15*). Martha’s Vineyard has developed a taste for Italian biscotti. Why not locally produce the hazelnuts that make them taste so



Figure 15. A hazelnut orchard to aspire to.
 Photo source: <https://www.coldstreamfarm.net>



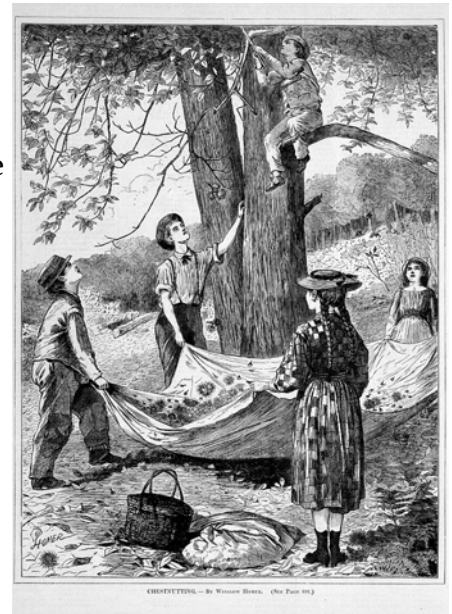
special? Of course, the nuts might attract a lot of animals in addition to humans.

Chestnuts

The last species I will enter in the picture is the chestnut, *Castanea dentata*, famously common and beloved in America for centuries. We know the sad history of the fungal blight that began in 1904 and killed four billion chestnut trees in the United States. But through the good works of the American Chestnut Foundation and other groups, introduction of blight-resistant chestnut trees is spreading, including here on Martha's Vineyard, where Adam Moore and the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation this year planted a grove. Think about roasting Vineyard chestnuts as part of a future Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Commercial opportunities

As hinted, I see several interesting commercial opportunities for fruit on the Island. Oak Bluffs maraschino cherries, true marmalade with Martha's Vineyard quince, biscotti with West Tisbury hazelnuts, Edgartown grenadine, Chilmark chestnuts ... and how about growing some of our pears inside bottles to make a local fruit schnapps. I am trying.



Chestnutting, 1870. Winslow Homer (American, 1836–1910) Wood engraving.



Kammer Williams Pear in Bottle Brandy (750ml)



Clear Creek PEAR-IN-THE-BOTTLE PEAR BRANDY



How To Grow A Pear In A Bottle

YouTube · Cooking Up a Story
Feb 5, 2008



Growing Fruit in Bottles

YouTube · Robert Morris
Jan 18, 2018



How to Grow Fruit In A Bottle

YouTube · The Home Handyman
Apr 5, 2017

Coda

In the interim, it has been endless fun planting, pruning, growing, harvesting ... and earning blue ribbons in August at the Agricultural Fair. 2021 was a banner year.



But orchards are beautiful in winter too. And we need the cold winter temperatures if we want to keep growing sour cherries.



Turn, turn, turn ... the blossoms of April and May truly inspire.



A final comment on harvesting ... To make harvesting even more fun, pair the activity with music. Every fruit has what TS Eliot might call a musical objective correlative. Try playing Glenn Gould's Goldberg Variations while picking blueberries, and Edith Piaf while picking cherries. You can pick forever.

