

Locally Grown Apples Best Says Pennsylvania Apple Queen

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
ORRTANNA (Franklin Co.) —
What's the best variety of apples to use for cooking or eating?

Ask Crystal Bard, the Pennsylvania Apple Queen, and she has one answer: "Locally grown apples."

It's appalling to her that so many people buy supermarket apples shipped from other states just because it is convenient.

"I guess I'm spoiled," she said, "but apples taste so much better fresh from the orchard. You get so much better quality."

Crystal's preference in apple varieties vary according to the time of the year. In early summer, she prefers Molly Delicious, later she switches to Red Delicious, then Lowry, and finally Golden Delicious.

"My grandmother makes everything from Golden Delicious apples and I just love them," Crystal said, "but some people prefer the tart apples and Stayman tastes good in cooking."

Crystal works for Bingham's Orchard, Inc., in St. Thomas. For three years, she has worked as a cashier at the orchard, which she said is one of the largest orchards in Franklin County where peaches, apricots, nectarines, and 17 varieties of apples are grown.

Because Crystal is convinced that everyone should try locally-grown apples, her aunt and uncle who own the Bingham's Orchard encouraged Crystal to enter the Apple Queen competition.

In preparation for the judges' questioning of her apple knowledge, Crystal studied a 45-page book describing the different varieties, and apple facts.

"It was easy because I had learned most of the answers while working at the orchard," Crystal said.

She also gave a two-minute speech on how she would promote apples during her reign. After winning the Franklin County crown, Crystal entered state competition where she again was tested on her apple knowledge. After winning the state title, Crystal now is responsible to carry the "apples are

good for you" message across the state.

She gives out cider and apples at Fairs, malls, commodity banquets, and other promotional events. She especially enjoys helping with orchard tours when elementary classes visit the orchard where she works. Recently, she appeared on the TV show, Lifestyles '92, where she assisted a chef in food preparation.

"Children are easily educated and take the brochures we give them back to their parents," Crystal said.

As a senior at James Buchanan High School in Mercersburg, Crystal plans to attend Millersville University on a track scholarship. She hopes to become a state police officer. This career plan began when Crystal was in sixth grade and heard a trooper talk about his work.

"It sounded so exciting and like so much fun," Crystal said.

In seventh and eighth grade, Crystal attended Police Camp, the first time as a camper and the second time as a counselor. "It's like most camps except it is based on military practices such as marching, wearing uniforms, and learning about every aspect of police work," Crystal said.

Crystal describes herself as a "sports nut" who participates in the following sports: field hockey, basketball, track, softball, bowling, and Powder Puff football. She is a member of the Varsity Club, band, and the National Honor Society.

While in college, Crystal expects to continue working at the orchard on weekends and summers. Here are some of her favorite apple recipes that she hopes you'll try.

STUFFED CELERY

1 apple, finely chopped
1/2 cup walnuts, finely chopped
Salad dressing or cream cheese celery, washed and cut into 2-inch lengths

Lemon juice, optional
Combine apple, nuts, and cream cheese and/or salad dressing in small bowl. Use to stuff celery. Sprinkle with lemon juice before serving.



Crystal Bard
Pa. Apple Queen

APPLE CAKE

1 1/2 cups sugar
3 eggs
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup oil
1 cup chopped walnuts
4 to 5 apples, sliced
Mix sugar and eggs until fluffy. Add vanilla. Mix flour, salt, baking soda, and cinnamon. Add to egg mixture, alternating with oil. Fold in apples and walnuts. Pour into 13x9-inch baking dish.
Topping:
Mix 1/2 cup walnuts with 2 tablespoons brown sugar. Sprinkle over batter before baking. Bake at 370 degrees for 45 minutes.

APPLE DUMPLINGS

Dough:
2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 cup shortening
1/2 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
Mix together to make dough. Roll and cut into squares. Enclose 1/2 apple in each. Place in baking dish.
Syrup:
1 cup brown sugar
1 1/2 cups water
1/2 cup butter
1 tablespoon cornstarch
Boil 4 to 5 minutes and pour over dumplings before baking. Bake 375 degrees about 30 minutes or until apples are tender.

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