

# Consuming Thoughts

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For Berks Co.



It's cider time! Although it's generally available year round, October seems to be the month when people really get a craving for sweet apple cider. Did you know that by law cider and apple juice are exactly the same? It's true. Basically cider is uncooked juice squeezed from fresh apples.

The best cider is made from a variety of apples which range from sweet to tart. The blending gives it a more desirable flavor.

To make cider or apple juice...the apples are first washed, trimmed and then ground. The pulp is placed in trays where it's wrapped in press

cloths and then gradually squeezed by the cider press. The juice that is squeezed from the pulp is then channeled into settling tanks where sediment is removed.

Some cider is strained so it ends up being a clear amber liquid, some is cloudy because of the fine bits of apple pulp that are allowed to remain in the juice.

If you pick up a jug marked "fresh" or "country" cider, it is probably being sold fresh from the press without any preservatives added. That means it will not keep for very long. Maybe ten days to two weeks at best.

Cider that has preservatives added will last longer, perhaps up to a month under refrigeration. It will be labeled if it has preservatives added.

Generally if cider is pasteurized and then sealed in a sterilized

can, it is sold in the grocery stores as apple juice, but if it's in a plastic jug it will be called cider and can be found in the produce department.

Now is also the ideal time to purchase apples. They are a nutritious snack to give as a treat for the ghosts or goblins who may visit your home of Halloween. Here's a few storage tips which will be helpful in keeping this lunch box favorite in top quality condition.

- Unrefrigerated ripened apples will retain their quality for about 1 week.

- Unripe apples can be quickly ripened at home by storing them in a partly sealed bag at room temperature.

- Ripened apples stored in the humidifier compartment of the refrigerator (35-40°F), in an unsealed plastic bag or in a film-wrapped tray, may retain their quality for 1 month.

- Bruised apples do not store as long and should be used first.

- Apples stored below 29°F will freeze. Freezing causes the

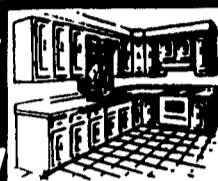
apples to become mushy and discolored, greatly reducing their quality.

- Storing apples in a partly sealed plastic bag helps reduce the odors apples can pick up from your refrigerator.

- Apples are a very versatile fruit. They can be used in pies, muffins, cakes, and salads or just eaten from your hand.

- Peeled and or cored apples brown quickly. To prevent this, soak apples 5 minutes in 1 quart of water with 3 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice and 2 crushed 500-mg vitamin C tablets. The flavor will not be affected, and the flesh will retain its color for about 3 hours at room temperature.

- For freezing and canning directions, call your local county extension agent and ask for the "Let's Preserve Apples" fact sheets or send a stamped self-address letter sized envelope to: Let's Preserve Apples, Berks County Cooperative Extension, Berks County Ag Center, PO Box 520, Leesport, PA 19533-0520.



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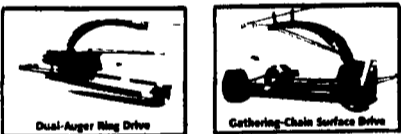
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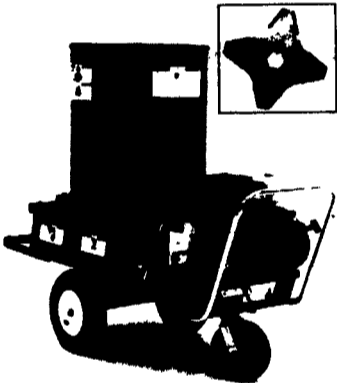
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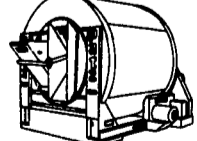
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