

# Kid's KOrner

## Fall Is The Season For Yummy Apple Cider And Apple Butter

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— Hey kids, have you noticed how everything is changing now that fall is here? Doesn't the sky seem a deeper shade of blue above gold and red leaves hanging on the trees? Some trees are already bare.

There's a chilly nip in the air that makes you grab a sweatshirt, jacket or sweater before going outside. I'll bet you do it almost without thinking. No doubt you stuff some tissues in a pocket 'cause your nose may drip. Noses tend to drip in colder weather.

And your moms and grandmas are covering pretty flowers at night so the frost doesn't destroy their prettiness by changing them into a yukky shade of brown.

It's also the season for crisp apples and the making of applebutter and apple cider.

Not everybody has an applebutter and apple cider plant near where they live like I do. But a man named Menno Beachy has a plant just a few miles away. When white vapors are rising from the valley, everybody knows cider and applebutter are being made there. That's because when the apple cookers are going, ceiling vents let heavy steam escape to the outside. It's different from chimney smoke.

First the raw apples are dumped into an outside chute. They tumble through a washing cycle on a conveyor.

Mr. Beachy says, "Those apples get a genuine scrubbing."

Then the elevator takes them high to a grinder where they are ground-up before going to the cider press.

Through the steam two men are seen releasing crushed apples onto a square pallet that they've covered with a sturdy material. They spread the crushed apples about four inches deep. The four corners of the material are folded over that layer and a new layer is started on top.

They repeat the process 11 times before moving the layers to the cider press. Mr. Beachy calls it "stacking."

He says it's an old-fashioned method that still works better than some new machines that take less work but have too much waste.

The cider press take about 15 minutes to do its job. Then Terry Wegman and Reuben Sommers reopen the covers and dump the apple pulp on an elevator that drops it on a heap outside the building. Later, the pulp helps to feed deer and other animals, they said.

To make apple butter, you cook cider and applesauce together. It takes almost an hour and a half for one batch. It bubbles out of the stainless steel cookers and looks like little brown frogs jumping out of water.

When the bubbling gets really bad, an employee turns on the water hose and sprays away the outside goo.

"Why are you doing that?" he was asked.

"To keep it clean," he said, adding that if the applebutter isn't rinsed off right away it gets hard

and crusty. You can't ever clean it off then.

He knows when the applebutter is exactly right by how it drips off his wooden paddle when it's dipped into the mixture.

Then Fannie Beachy, Mr. Beachy's sister, fills new jars with the fresh applebutter.

She's amazing. She pulls down a lever and zip, the jar fills in a second. She passes it to a person with the lid and grabs another jar. Fannie never runs it over even though it comes out of the spout so fast.

Ron Higson and his son-in-law, Brian Root, from Wiley Ford, West Virginia, come to Beachy's every year with truck loads of red and yellow Delicious apples. They bring about 1,800 or 2,000 bushels of them.

Mr. Higson says applebutter is a very healthy product and one of his favorite foods.

Mr. Beachy won't let supermarkets sell his applebutter

because it is a special food product that's completely natural. Only 48 stores in the United States get to sell it. Those are specialty stores where quality is more important than how much is sold.

Of course, people can buy it at the plant or call Sam Beachy and Sons. That's the name of the business.

Applebutter is tasty and good for you. Some folks spread it over bread. Others like it on top of cottage cheese. And apple cider is a terrific drink, hot or cold, plain, or fancied up with spices.

If an applebutter and cider making plant is near you, ask someone to take you there. It's family fun and an educational field trip for school classes.

Here in Salisbury, Beachy's won't make applebutter or cider after Thanksgiving Day. But by that time, Mr. Beachy says Sam Beachy and Sons will have made 60,000 gallons of apple cider and 20,000 gallons of applebutter this fall.



Here the red Delicious apples are coming out of the washer, the first step for making cider or applebutter. Terry Wegman will put them in the applesauce tank.



Terry Wegman and Reuben Sommers are stacking layers of crushed apples 11 tiers high to be pressed into fresh apple cider at Sam Beachy and Sons, Salisbury, Pa.



Terry Wegman is filling plastic jugs with fresh apple cider at Sam Beachy and Sons, Salisbury, Pa.



Fannie Beachy fills pint jars with fresh applebutter at Sam Beachy and Son, Salisbury, Pa.