

In Good Growing Season

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orchards. They also market Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Empire, Winesap, McIntosh, and others.

An attraction to customers at the market is the scent of the ripe fruit, which "you can smell all the way out to the parking lot," said Scholl.

The market is open at 10 a.m. — but people, especially at the start of peach and apple seasons, line up outside, looking in the window, ready to purchase at 9:30 or earlier.

The orchard begins pressing apples for cider in September.

The Scholls use a cider press built by Orchard Equipment and Supply of Conway, Mass. in 1965 and modified to grind up a larger

quantity of apples per hour. Scholl said the machine can produce up to about 100 gallons of cider per hour. Pressing is two to three times a week at 100-120 gallons per pressing.

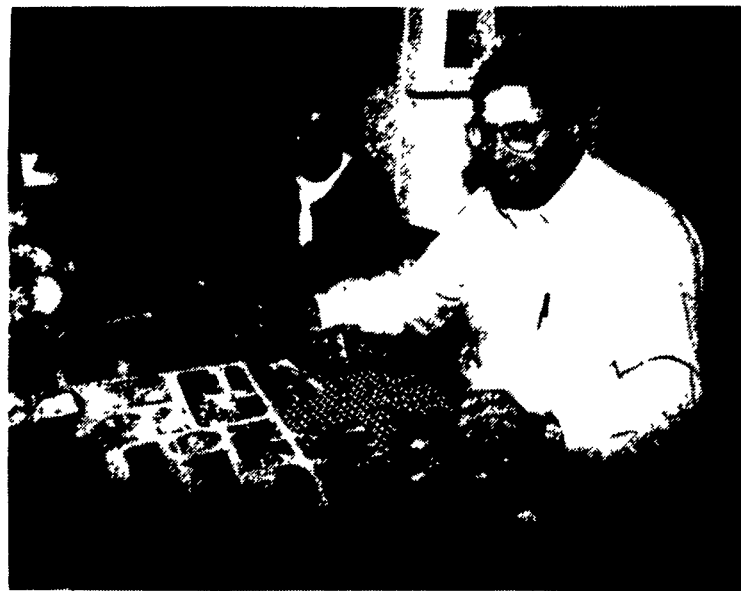
"We try to keep the cider fresh," he said. The Scholls don't want to sell cider older than three days. They press about 2,000-3,000 gallons per year.

In making cider, the Scholls blend five varieties for maximum flavor, he noted. The varieties include Red and Golden Delicious, Winesap, Empire, and McIntosh. Often, Romes and Northern Spy are used.

Scholl noted that an apple is 80 percent juice. The cider is bottled



Part-time work is also provided by Betty Jaxheimer, George's aunt, who lives nearby and helps out at the farm market.



George Scholl, right, works full-time as a claims investigator for an insurance company and maintains the trees. Faith, his wife, runs the farm market, dealing with the customers. George said, "Actual tree work to me is therapy." Here they sort through family photo albums.

at the orchard. The pulp is either sold as deer feed or dumped.

The cider is unpasteurized and no preservatives are used. Cider pasteurization "is a big issue in the industry," he said. Many orchards are switching to pasteurization at a cost of \$15,000-\$20,000 per machine.

Scholl sells no spring flowers or bedding plants. However, the orchard sells cut flowers and mums in the fall. "It's something to add color to the stand," he said. Customers have often com-

mented on shopping at the market. For them, entering the market in the summer and fall "is like going into another world," he said, with the color of things grown locally to brighten the day.

The holiday season, especially right before Thanksgiving and into the Christmas season, are busy ones for the Scholls. In addition, the annual Bethlehem Music Fest is held in the summer, which draws a lot of business to the farm market.

The past several years have

offered their own challenges to the orchard growers. In 1992, a hailstorm "wiped us out," said Scholl, destroying the fruits at the Kempton farm. While they salvaged a good portion of the crop, many of the fruits that year were nicked and scarred.

"We got help where we could from other growers," he said.

Customers were so supportive that Scholl believes that sales actually increased that year.

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