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# PRODUCE NOTES

Sept 26, 2007

## The Midas Touch: Apple Farm's Philo Gold

Apple Farm, a family-operated biodynamic farm near Philo, California, produces an acclaimed heirloom apple they have named the Philo Gold. On this wonderful farm grows many venerable apple trees, some of which were likely among the first golden delicious apple trees planted in California. The Philo Gold is unlike any other golden apple—it delights the senses! It is remarkably fragrant (try closing your eyes and smelling the apple when it's at room temperature, as it's less aromatic when chilled), its skin is speckled and soft gold in color, sometimes with a blush of rose-pink, and the apple's flesh is super sweet, yet slightly, delightfully tart. Once cut, the apple's flesh resists browning, so it works well served sliced or in a salad. The Philo Gold is also great as a cooking or baking apple, because its flesh holds its firmness and color through cooking. In recipes calling for sugar, such as pie or sauce recipes, you may want to cut down the amount of sugar you use, as the Philo Gold is an especially sweet apple.

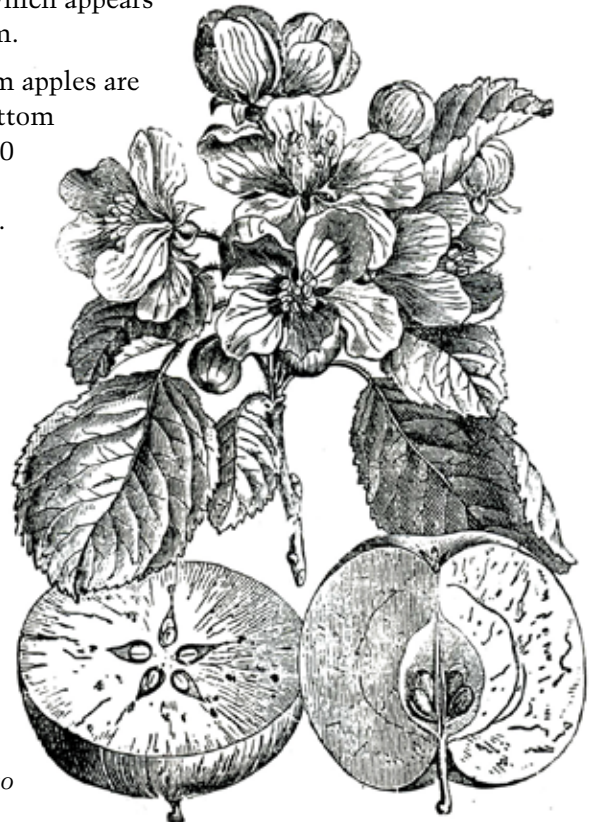
Freshly harvested apples have their own waxy coating that protects them from water loss. Nearly all conventional apples are washed at the fruit packing sheds to remove dust and chemical residues. This washing removes about half of the apple's natural, original wax. The apples are then re-waxed with caranuba wax or shellac—this is why most conventionally grown and treated apples are so shiny and glossy in appearance. In contrast, at Apple Farm, the apples are organically grown, and they are picked and packed by hand. The apples are not washed, (nor are they waxed), and they are sent to market with their own natural wax intact, which appears as a powdery, soft surface bloom.

Apple Farm says, "Our heirloom apples are grown on the Navarro River bottom in Mendocino County. Our 1700 trees range in age from young whips to 90 year old specimens. The orchard is truly a treasure in an area that is quickly losing its diversity. Morning fog and hot afternoons produce tender skinned and intensely perfumed fruit."

Apple Farm has a lovely and informative website where you can read about the farm, the philosophy, the families who farm there, and the numerous varieties of apples they produce!

[www.philoapplefarm.com/](http://www.philoapplefarm.com/)

- Dani Yamamoto



### A Vast Variety of Apple Farm Apples

Apple Farm produces over 90 varieties of apples!

The following is a list of some of the ones we will see. Sometimes we only get a few boxes of each variety, so keep your eyes peeled for offerings on our availability list.

#### Apple Varieties:

Ashmead's Kernal, Baldwin, Black Twig, Connell Red, Cortland, Cox' Orange Pippin, Crabapple, Golden Russet, Gravenstein, Jonathan, King David, McIntosh, Newton's Pippin, Philo Gold, Red Delicious, Red Gold, Rhode Island, Sierra Beauty, Spitzenburg, Tydeman Red, Wickson, and Winter Banana

We are also likely to get a small amount of quince from Apple Farm!

## Biodynamic vs. Organic: What's the Difference?

In the United States, biodynamic certification is separate from organic certification. *Biodynamic* is a trademark held by the Demeter association of biodynamic farmers for the purpose of maintaining certain production standards. Learn more about Demeter's Biodynamic certification at: [www.demeter-usa.org/](http://www.demeter-usa.org/)

Biodynamic farming is based on the teachings of German philosopher and scientist Rudolph Steiner, who believed that each farm is inseparable from the whole earth as a biological system, and that it should be able to sustain its own fertility and life cycles. The farmer, the nutrients, the plants, the animals, seasons and celestial events are all considered integral parts of the farm system. Cover crops, green manures and crop rotations are used in biodynamic farming. "How is this different from regular organic farming?" you may wonder.

The two programs are similar in that they both avoid most synthetic inputs, they require crop rotation, focus on soil conservation, cover crops, green manure, buffer zones and organic seed. However, biodynamic farming prohibits some materials that many organic growers rely on, and has some additional requirements as well.

### Prohibited materials in biodynamic farming:

- Bone meal and blood meal (fish-derived is okay)
- Gibberellic acid (Organic growers use a naturally fermented form of this. It plumps and gives crunch to cherries and grapes, increases the size of artichokes and can be used to delay the maturation of fruit on the tree.)
- Chilean Nitrate (a form of nitrogen)
- Gelatin
- Compost derived from municipal composting programs

### Some other requirements unique to biodynamic farming:

- The farm plan includes the use of livestock whenever possible
- 10% of the land should remain in bio reserve
- Timing of weeding, planting, pruning and tilling is done when in harmony with the celestial calendar
- No planting under high voltage power lines
- Biodynamic sprouts must be grown from biodynamic seeds

Demeter also is an NOP\*-accredited organic certifier, and provides a certification that says a farm is organic—the certification is called "Stellar". Most of the biodynamic product we sell is Stellar certified.

### Biodynamic Certifications:

Demeter: Certified Biodynamic

Stellar: Certified organic. May also be Biodynamic

Aurora: transitioning to Biodynamic

\*USDA National Organic Program



- information reprinted from October 17, 2005 Produce Notes

## Apple Walnut Salad

(serves 4)

*This salad is a lighter take on traditional Waldorf salad, as it doesn't use mayonnaise.*

### Ingredients:

Salad:

- 4 cups spring mix
- 1 rib celery, thinly sliced
- 1 cup of walnuts, soaked in room temperature salted water for 1 hour\*
- 2 crisp apples, cored and sliced
- 1 bunch tarragon or fresh herb of choice, de-stemmed

Dressing:

- Apple cider vinegar (or lemon juice)
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Honey
- Dijon mustard
- Pinch of dried tarragon
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Method:

1. Drain and toast the walnuts in a 350 degree oven for about 15-25 minutes, checking often. Remove from oven and let cool completely.
2. Mix the dressing ingredients together, adjusting ingredients to taste, and toss together with the salad ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Serve cold, and enjoy!

\*Because walnuts tend to have a slightly bitter flavor, soaking the walnuts before toasting yields a crisper, sweeter flavor.

- Denise McAllan, Purchasing