



A day devoted to all things apple

Growers in County to offer workshops, samples

BY JULIA BAYLY
BDN STAFF

While farmers in the southern and central parts of Maine are assessing the potential damage of this summer's drought on their apple crops, growers in the northern part of the state are on track for a pretty good harvest.

"I think we've had enough rain up here so things are going to be OK," Angie Wotton of the Southern Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District said. "I know my own personal little orchard looks pretty good, and things look better the farther north you go."

The County is known more for its annual potato harvest, but Wotton and her fellow orchardists want the Aroostook apple to have its own day in the sun.



JULIA BAYLY | BDN

A few apples can be seen on Aug. 30 at Rusty Metal Farm in Fort Kent. Northern Maine's landscape is dotted with older, wild apple trees, and landowners can learn how to reclaim them and increase yields at Aroostook Apple Day on Oct. 8 at the Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum in Littleton.

Aroostook Apple Day is slated for 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Oct. 8 at the Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum in Littleton.

"Apples are definitely a growing crop in northern Maine," Wotton said. "There are a lot of old orchards up here that people are looking to reclaim."

As part of the event, Wotton said an expert on identifying apples will be on hand and regional apple growers are encouraged to bring any mystery apples they have growing to learn what they are.

"Originally, people did not think we could grow apples up here," Wotton said. "But that proved to not be the case, and a lot of the later fall varieties that do not do well in other parts of Maine do really well up here."

Many of the newer apple varieties growing in northern Maine came over the border from New Brunswick, according to Wotton, including Dudley, Duchess and The New Brunswick.

"We want people to be more aware of the varieties that are out there and
See Apples, Page C3



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

Pete Geiger, editor of the Farmers' Almanac, talks about the almanac at his office in Lewiston recently. Geiger Bros. has published the almanac since the 1950s.

'You need to be a lover of learning'

Farmers' Almanac unearths classic articles for 200th edition

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

Deep in the otherwise ordinary Geiger Bros. office building in an industrial part of Lewiston lurks a secret: a small, private museum dedicated to the Farmers' Almanac, a national mainstay that has been published every year since 1818. There's an old-fashioned editor's office, complete with a rickety wooden chair that could have — and may have — belonged to the very first editor, David Young. There's a small potbellied stove and a big roll-top desk with cubbies that are perfect for tucking away bits of wit, wisdom and weather forecasts. The museum also features a collection



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

of 18th and 19th century American almanacs of all sizes and from all parts of the growing country.

But you get the sense that a lot of the real work on the modern Farmers' Almanac — published in Lewiston since the 1950s by Geiger Bros. — happens at a big wooden table. That's where current editor Pete Geiger sits to talk expansively about one of his very favorite things — the book that his father brought into the family business in the 1930s. Geiger uses the title "Philom," short for philomath, which means "lover of learning,"

and said the word is apt for what he does.

"You need to be a lover of learning if you're an editor of an almanac," the affable, enthusiastic 65-year-old said. "I'm thrilled to be part of it."

It's a big year for the humble almanac, which has kept generations of Americans company through wartime and peacetime, through dizzying technological advances and then the return of interest in gardening, backyard chickens and putting up one's own food. So to do right by the 200th consecutive edition — published this summer — Gei-

ger locked himself in the museum for a weekend carefully pored over the fragile almanacs from days of yore, searching for snippets of advice, wit, wisdom and more to include in the new volume.

And he found some doozies.

From the 1878 Farmers' Almanac, there is a parenting tip for an infallible way to keep babies perfectly quiet for hours: to smear its fingers with thick molasses and then put half a dozen feathers in its hands. "The young one will set and pick the feathers from one hand to the other, until it
See Almanac, Page C2

Midcoast farmers aim to buy spot that was almost a Wal-Mart

BY MAIA ZEWERT
LINCOLN COUNTY NEWS

NEWCASTLE — After almost 12 years of leasing farm land, the owners of Morning Dew Farm are ready to put down permanent roots with the purchase of a 68-acre property on Route 1 in Damariscotta that was nearly the site of a Wal-Mart.

Brendan McQuillen and Brady Hatch, of Newcastle, have launched an online fundraiser to assist in their purchase of the property.

Morning Dew Farm is a certified-organic vegetable farm run by the husband-and-wife team. In addition to selling produce at the Damariscotta Farmers Market and offering a community-supported agriculture program, Morning Dew Farm also supplies local food pantries, stores, and restaurants with vegetables, including Rising Tide Community Market, Newcastle Public House, and the Damariscotta River Grill.

All food grown by Morning Dew Farm is eaten within 30 miles of the farm, Hatch said.

McQuillen and Hatch got their start in farming 12 years ago, when Hatch's family leased the couple a quarter-acre of property. The couple realized soon after that they would need to expand their operation in order to meet their goals.

"After a few years, we realized that in order to grow the food for the community that we wanted to and that there was a demand for, we would need to
See Property, Page C3



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Gordon Kenyon (top), 72, started Locust Grove farm in Albion in the early 1980s. He grows 14 varieties of peaches on about 1,000 trees. Ben Newell (above) sorts freshly picked peaches at Locust Grove farm in Albion recently.

PEACHY KEEN

Maine farmer gets sweet boost amid New England crop shortage

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

ALBION — So few peaches are harvested in Maine and northern New England that the cold-sensitive crop doesn't officially count here, statistically or economically speaking.

But don't tell that to grower Gordon Kenyon, 73, who owns Locust Grove Farm atop Quaker Hill in Albion. Near-total crop failure in southern New England this summer has meant that the sweet, juicy peaches from his 1,000 or so trees are in extremely high demand. The fruit, which he previously sold largely out of his garage, has been traveling south to Boston and even to New York City, where eateries

and stores, including the famous gourmet grocer Dean & DeLuca, are scooping it up.

"They have been shipped from here in central Maine to New York City, believe it or not," a marveling Kenyon said recently. "I've been wanting to expand my markets because of the increase in the numbers of trees I have. And this year I wanted to take advantage of the lack of peaches in southern New England."

The lack of peaches elsewhere in the region was caused by the unseasonably warm winter that resulted in peach trees breaking their dormancy too early and the sudden deep freeze around Valentine's Day, which killed their tender, vulnerable
See Peaches, Page C2