



## Growing Apples

Apple growing is an important industry in America. Worldwide, the United States ranks second in apple production.

The first U.S. apple trees were planted by the pilgrims in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In the early 1800s John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed, traveled across the Ohio Valley carrying bags of apple seeds. As he ventured westward, he planted seeds and grew apple trees wherever he roamed to ensure that settlers living in the western frontier would have nutritious apples to eat.

Today, the science of apple growing is called pomology. Over the years many people have worked together to refine methods to produce the best formed and tastiest apples. It takes about four or five years for apple trees to produce their first fruits. Apple trees are grown on farms, better known as apple orchards. In spring, apple trees blossom with fragrant, sweet smelling white flowers. Many apple growers place beehives in their orchards while the trees are blossoming so that the honeybees can pollinate the flowers. When the blossoms fall off the pollinated flowers, baby apples begin to grow in their place.

The apple crop is harvested in the fall when the apples are fully grown and ripened. Most of our nation's crop is picked from the trees by hand, then washed, packed and delivered by refrigerated trains and trucks to markets and grocery stores, or made into apple juice, apple cider, apple butter, applesauce and other nutritious apple products.