

Fruit News article August 2016

Let the apple harvest begin...my favorite time of the year.

By the time you read this, the mediocre peach harvest will be winding down and we will be knee-deep in what looks to be a pretty decent apple harvest. Common sights will include Pick-Your-Own customers, tractors, trucks, picking buckets, ladders, and bins. This is the make or break time of the year for many of us in the tree-fruit business. While it is stressful, backbreaking and generally exhausting, the goal of completing another growing season is in sight.

Why is it my favorite time of the year? The warm days, crisp cool nights, the brilliant orange, red and yellow colors, and intense blue skies have a lot to do with it, but more importantly it is the culmination of a year's worth of work. The carrot at the end of the stick you have been chasing all year. Think about all the hard work you put in all year to get to this point. The challenges of the growing season. The cold, windy days and trudging through the deep snow during the pruning season. The cold, sleepless nights during bloom. The meetings, thinning, watering, pest control, mowing and pencil pushing all summer. The time is finally here to reap the reward for all your hard work.

My wish for you is that you can find the joy of harvest season too. Stop being a scientist and businessman for a minute and enjoy the beauty of the season. Try to take a few minutes each day in the middle of the rat race to look around and appreciate all the work that it took to get your crop to this point. Watch the sun come up over the apple trees. Glance out across the top of a truckload of neatly stacked bins full of apples. Listen to the growl of the tractor and truck engines as they pull the heavy apples out of the field. Slice an apple you pull off the tree and savor the intoxicating freshness that few in the "real world" get to experience. And most importantly, breathe deeply. Take in the smells of fall from the fresh cut apple to the musky rotting apple under the tree. Of all the jobs in the world, this one is pretty darn awesome.

Best wishes for a great fall harvest,
Tad

Tad Kuntz
SHAP President

"Bean finds the best apple in our tree and hands it up to me."
"You know what this tastes like when you first bite into it?" she asks.
"No, what?"
"Blue sky."
"You're zoomed."
"You ever eat blue sky?"
"No," I admit.
"Try it sometime," she says. "It's apple-flavored."

— **Rodman Philbrick, The Last Book in the Universe**