

Fruit News article October 2016

Trying to find the time to get everything done in the fall is always a challenge in our business. Most of us can't do it alone and depend on delegating to family members and employees to get everything done. Each month I send out an e-newsletter from our Farm Market to our customers, but it's always hard to find the time and energy to write. A few years ago my daughter offered to write the newsletter, and I handed it over without hesitation. She is now in her senior year as a Cell and Molecular Biology major at West Chester University, but somehow still finds the time to write the newsletter. I really enjoyed her letter this month and since I'm going ten different directions in October, I thought I'd share her writing this month. Hope you enjoy reading her letter as much as I did.

Sincerely,
Tad Kuntz
SHAP President

Let me put you in a few moments of my childhood. Imagine being six years old and coming back from school hungry for a snack. Instead of reaching into the cabinet for junk food, you run outside and pick an apple from a tree in one of your father's orchards. You sit on a large rock, warmed by the afternoon sun, and let the apple juice run down your arms. You smile and curiously observe the honey bees swimming in the air around you and barn kittens wrestling a few trees away. You are only a child, but appreciate the world you are living in.

The one thing that keeps me coming back to work at the farm market between semesters (even though it hardly pertains to my educational goals) is my desire to give kids the childhood that I had - to give them a snippet of my afternoons. Growing up on a farm provided me with an understanding of where my food came from, how I could nourish my body with produce, and an appreciation for nature. These are tough understandings to teach from a book, and I want to help provide the next generation with the experiences I had.

While I can't quite provide kids the full experience of the past 21 years of my life, I can get them closer to it by encouraging them to pick their own apples and pumpkins at the farm market. There are a few major lessons which I believe are transferrable to the next generation through picking their own fruit (yes, pumpkins are fruit too) and can teach them some priceless lessons:

1. Nature is incredible.

We depend so much on Mother Nature to grow the produce which sustains us, and we often forget to appreciate her art. Nothing establishes an appreciation and connection to nature like pulling an apple right off of a supple limb and immediately biting into it.

2. Fresh produce is incomparably dominant. The difference in flavor between a grocery store bought apple versus a tree-ripened apple is unbelievably different. Albeit, the apples in our market are so fresh there is little difference between them and a fresh picked apple

3. Fresh produce can be affordable.

Buying fresh and locally is desirable because it supports the local economy, allows you to meet the people producing your food, and provides the freshest fruits and vegetables. That being said, it can often be the more expensive option in the grocery store. Luckily for most of you, we are located locally and our pick-your-own apples are less than a dollar per pound (compared to an average of \$1.99 per pound at local grocery stores). Teaching your kids how to affordably not eat ramen in college will be *highly* appreciated.

4. Picking fruit is a bonding experience. When I was 14 I ran the pick-your-own stand each day after school. I don't remember much about that year (my excuse being that my brain is currently filled with biochemistry), but I clearly remember the happiness exuded by the families picking apples. I watched fathers lift their giggling daughters to reach the highest, shiniest apples and grandparent's smiles beaming at excited grandchildren. There was nothing but joy brought to the families bundled in scarves, pulling wagons full of fruit, and choosing Halloween pumpkins.

Don't get me wrong - I am sure your little ones will have amazing lives with or without apple picking. All I'm saying is my childhood was awesome, and I'd love to share a piece of it with the next generation.

Sincerely, from under a pile of textbooks,
Mini-Tad