

FUJI

In Japan, Fuji apples are the unrivaled best-seller. Japanese consumers prefer them almost to the exclusion of other varieties and Japan's apple imports remain low.

Aomori Prefecture (where Fuji was created) is perhaps the best known apple growing region of Japan. Of the roughly 900,000 tons of Japanese apples produced annually, 500,000 tons come from Aomori. Fuji apples account for 80% of China's 20 million tons grown annually. Since their introduction into the U.S. market in the 1980s, Fuji apples have continued to gain popularity with American consumers as well.

In taste tests Fuji consistently scores at or near the top, and among late-maturing varieties it is a stand-out. Not a particularly gorgeous variety, it signals the reemergence of taste and texture as the main reasons for growing an apple.

PLACE OF ORIGIN/YEAR: Tohoku Research Station, Fujisaki, Aomori, Japan 1962; introduced to USA 1980

PARENTAGE: Ralls Genet (Rawls Jenet) x Delicious

DESCRIPTION: large in size, tall and rectangular in shape

SKIN COLOR: yellowish green skin with an orange-red flush and darker stripes, typically has a darker blush on sun side

FLESH TEXTURE: crisp, juicy outstanding texture, cream-colored, fine-grained

FLAVOR: very sweet, aromatic, slightly sub-acid. Some feel the flavor improves with age.

USES: EATING: excellent for eating fresh and for salads

BAKING: good for pies

COOKING: holds its shape in cooking

SAUCE: some say this is the best sauce apple with its buttery flavor

HARVEST TIME: 10/4/07

SEASON: October through January, may require up to 200 days to mature

STORAGE-ABILITY: a good keeper, retains its firmness for up to a year in refrigeration.