apples to apples

Gravenstein
Dates back at least to the 1700s. Perhaps one of the tastiest of all apples, juicy with a sweet/sharp flavor. Particularly good for desserts and applesauce. Among the earliest to ripen, coming to harvest in late July and early August. Its cousin, the Red Gravenstein, is less tart.

Liberty
Tart cross between a Macoun and Purdue. A fairly new variety (introduced in 1978) that ripens in early October.

Cortland
Turn-of-the-century cross between a McIntosh and Ben Davis, somewhat juicy with a moderately sweet flavor. Doesn’t brown, making it a popular choice for salads. Ripens in late September.

Jonagold
A cross between a Jonathan and a Golden Delicious, with a sharp and sweet flavor that also makes it good for baking. Available in October.

Crispin
Also known as the Mutsu. Very juicy, with a sweet, tangy flavor, it’s also very good as a dessert apple. Ripens in October.

Spartan
Sweet, tart and juicy, and especially good when eaten fresh. Ripens in late September.

Stayman
A variant of Winesap, with a tart, tangy flavor and firm, crisp flesh, and good for snacking. Stores well. Ripens September to October.

Winesap
From the eastern U.S. in the 1800s, a crisp, medium-sized fruit with a powerful, tart, wine-like flavor that makes it good for baking and excellent for cider. Ripens in October.

Baldwin

Melrose
The state apple of Ohio has a sweet and a slightly acidic flavor. Ripens in mid-to-late October, and if stored well develops complex flavors, making it ideal for holiday cooking.

Rome
One of the best cooking apples, with a sweet, slightly tart taste. Firm and stores well. Ripens in mid-October.

Newtown Pippin
One of Thomas Jefferson’s favorite apples, which he grew in his orchard at Monticello. Good for most everything, its cider is highly sought after. Originating in Newtown, New York, it ripens late October/early November.

Macoun
Firm and juicy with a sweet, aromatic flavor. Ripens in October and is an excellent all-around dessert apple.

Tired of Galas and Granny Smiths from the grocery store? A wide variety of less-common heirlooms can be found growing in Connecticut orchards. Here are a few worth seeking out.

ALL PHOTOS VIA SHUTTERSTOCK: BALDWIN: GREG KUSHMEREK • CORTLAND: CHYRACAT • CRISPIN: GG PRO PHOTO • GRAVENSTEIN: JAMIE ROACH • JONAGOLD: JOAO VIRISSIMO • LIBERTY & MACOUN: ERIKA I MITCHELL • MELROSE: MANFRED RUCKSZIO • NEWTOWN PIPPIN: MARIUSZ S. JURGIELIWICZ • ROME & STAYMAN: NIKOLAY KURZENKO • SPARTAN PHOTOGAL • WINESAP: RAY BEMISH • ICONS: NADINIKO