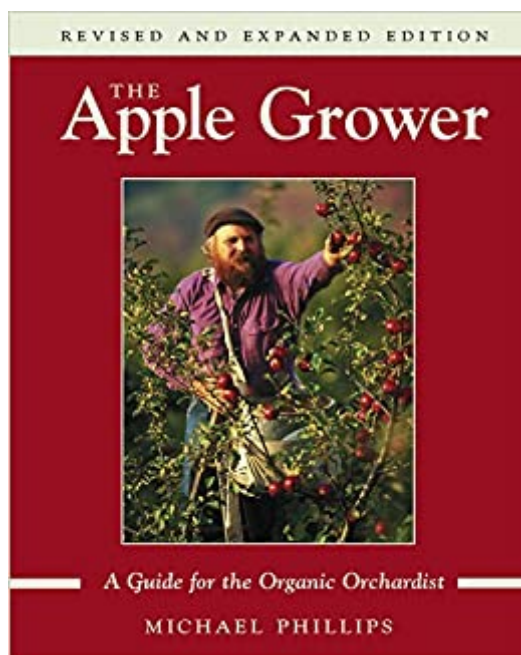


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# The Apple Grower: A Guide For The Organic Orchardist



## Synopsis

For decades fruit growers have sprayed their trees with toxic chemicals in an attempt to control a range of insect and fungal pests. Yet it is possible to grow apples responsibly, by applying the intuitive knowledge of our great-grandparents with the fruits of modern scientific research and innovation. Since *The Apple Grower* first appeared in 1998, orchardist Michael Phillips has continued his research with apples, which have been called "organic's final frontier." In this new edition of his widely acclaimed work, Phillips delves even deeper into the mysteries of growing good fruit with minimal inputs. Some of the cutting-edge topics he explores include: The use of kaolin clay as an effective strategy against curculio and borers, as well as its limitations Creating a diverse, healthy orchard ecosystem through understory management of plants, nutrients, and beneficial microorganisms How to make a small apple business viable by focusing on heritage and regional varieties, value-added products, and the "community orchard" model The author's personal voice and clear-eyed advice have already made *The Apple Grower* a classic among small-scale growers and home orchardists. In fact, anyone serious about succeeding with apples needs to have this updated edition on their bookshelf.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Northern Woodlands (Review)-As anyone who has ever planted a few apple trees knows all too well, growing apples can be a perplexing and frustrating endeavor. The trouble is that apples are very attractive to many of nature's creatures besides humans. And at least one of these creatures,

from deer to apple maggot flies, and from the roundheaded apple tree borer to mice (not to mention the long list of diseases that also affect apples), is sure to be working for its share of the fruit (and in some cases the tree) every day of the year. But if you've ever baked a pie made from your own apples, or pressed a batch of cider from them, the trials and tribulations all seem worth it with that first bite or sip. Michael Phillips' revised *The Apple Grower* has as much help as you'll find anywhere to get you to that first bite of pie or sip of cider. The previous edition, published in 1998, was the bible for many backyard orchardists and commercial organic growers. The new edition, boasting color photos and expanded and better-organized chapters, is a real treat for anyone interested in apples. The new edition's chapter on diseases and pests will be helpful to those left scratching their head about who or what is eating the apples or trees they are trying to grow. Phillips sprinkles tributes to other apple growers throughout the text. These persistent and dedicated souls, along with Phillips, are exploring uncharted territory: they are trying, without the use of traditional pesticides and chemicals, to keep ever-evolving pests and diseases away from trees that are themselves not evolving. All named apple varieties are genetic dead ends. A Macintosh today is genetically identical to a Macintosh from a century ago, but the bugs and diseases have spent that time evolving to break through the trees' defenses. Phillips presents intriguing ideas about orchard soils. Since people started growing apples in orchards, those orchard soils have largely been bacterially based, meaning that fertility has been maintained by the addition of bacteria-laden manure. Sheep and cattle were allowed to graze the grass and eat dropped apples, adding manure to the soils, and often the orchard was formerly pasture or hayfield, where manure was regularly added to maintain fertility. Bacteria-based soils are great for grasses and hay crops, but not necessarily for trees. Phillips argues that apple trees are still, well, trees, and like other trees, they prefer forest soils, which rely mainly on fungi to break down organic matter such as bark, wood, and other plant matter to maintain soil fertility. Phillips believes that this soil is what apple trees naturally want, and that it makes them healthier and better able to deal with pests and diseases. He has been experimenting with using fast-growing comfrey in his orchard, cutting it down to add rotting plant matter and to stifle the growth of grass, which can rob an apple tree's surface feeder roots of nutrients. He advocates adding composted branches, bark, wood chips, and even excess chunks of sheetrock to your orchard to promote the fungi in the soil and deter grasses. Phillips' style is more writerly than reference. His homespun stories about his many years of trying to outwit and outmaneuver the legions of apple-loving creatures are both entertaining and packed with tips. Phillips' extremely handy compendium of orchard tasks has always served as my basic plan of attack for what to do in my orchard, and the revised and expanded edition will be a welcome

addition to my library. I have no doubt that over time it will take on the grimy, thumbed-through, and well-used look of my copy of the first edition of *The Apple Grower*. (by Carl Demrow) Northern Woodlands- "Michael Phillips' revised *The Apple Grower* has as much help as you'll find anywhere to get you to that first bite of pie or sip of cider. The previous edition, published in 1998, was the bible for many backyard orchardists and commercial organic growers. The new edition, boasting color photos and expanded and better-organized chapters, is a real treat for anyone interested in apples. The new edition's chapter on diseases and pests will be helpful to those left scratching their head about who or what is eating the apples or trees they are trying to grow. Phillips' style is more writerly than reference. His homespun stories about his many years of trying to outwit and outmaneuver the legions of apple-loving creatures are both entertaining and packed with tips. Phillips' extremely handy compendium of orchard tasks has always served as my basic plan of attack for what to do in my orchard, and the revised and expanded edition will be a welcome addition to my library. I have no doubt that over time it will take on the grimy, thumbed-through, and well-used look of my copy of the first edition of *The Apple Grower*. "A must read for anyone who grows apples or is contemplating doing so."--Lee A. Reich, garden author and Associated Press syndicated columnist

"Northern Woodlands" magazine, Spring '06 issue, pg.64. Book Review written by Carl Demrow *The Apple Grower*, Revised and Expanded Edition By Michael Phillips. Chelsea Green Publishing, 2005. As anyone who has ever planted a few apple trees knows all too well, growing apples can be a perplexing and frustrating endeavor. The trouble is that apples are very attractive to many of nature's creatures besides humans. And at least one of these creatures, from deer to apple maggot flies, and from the roundheaded apple tree borer to mice (not to mention the long list of diseases that also affect apples), is sure to be working for its share of the fruit (and in some cases the tree) every day of the year. But if you've ever baked a pie made from your own apples, or pressed a batch of cider from them, the trials and tribulations all seem worth it with that first bite or sip. Michael Phillips' revised *The Apple Grower* has as much help as you'll find anywhere to get you to that first bite of pie or sip of cider. The previous edition, published in 1998, was the bible for many backyard orchardists and commercial organic growers. The new edition, boasting color photos and expanded and better-organized chapters, is a real treat for anyone interested in apples. The new edition's chapter on diseases and pests will be helpful to those left scratching their head about who or what is eating the apples or trees they are trying to grow. Phillips sprinkles tributes to other apple growers throughout the text. These persistent and

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This book is full of information on Apple Trees. I have 4 overgrown apple trees that will benefit from this book.

I highly recommend the book to everyone from the back yard grower to the full blown orchard owner. The book is very comprehensive look at every aspect of growing apples (and fruit in general) from the planning stage pre-planting and choosing a site to harvest and beyond. I also think the book was well written to read more like a novel, with some background story gleaned from his own life and experience on his orchard. This made the book read better than a boring technical

cooperative extension paper, which of course anyone can "Google" online. The only area I feel that went a little too far was some of the holistic approaches. Although, when reading about the holistic idea's, I cannot help but think of my eccentric aunt who used to talk to the tree's and thank them for their bounty. You could not pick anything in her garden, without thanking them for their fruit and she used to talk to her tree's like they were her children, but let me tell you, her tree's produced well, so who's to say different? I love the organic approach, and I feel that the farmers back in the day were doing it right, before agribusiness and chemical farming came into use, the organic way is truly the only long term sustainable way we can survive on this planet in the long run. I only hope that we do not poison our planet beyond repair and are able to change our methods, before it is too late. Good reading.

I LOVE this book. I'm particularly impressed with the density of information: too many hobby farm/small farm books take a once-over-lightly approach, but this one is deep on detail. I also appreciate the discussion of seedling trees: typically I've seen them ignored or dismissed as irrelevant. The discussion of root stock is a help too; before this I've seen it only discussed in terms of it's limiting factor on size, but this also introduces issues of hardiness and climate appropriateness. The book is incredibly thorough while reminding the reader that there are no "cook books" to growing organic orchards, it's still an art and science that is being developed. I spent the first few years of my life on an old-fashioned orchard and have never recovered. Now, after 30 big-city, corporate years the world is circling back to the kind of orchard I've always longed to have, and this book is filled with invaluable information on how to proceed. Next year I'm headed back to the country, this book in hand, to make a home and create a backyard cider orchard. I know it's hard work and the best of it may happen after I'm gone, but this book gives me the courage to begin and information to guide me as I figure it out. I hope within 5 - 10 years I'll be toasting the author with my own apple cider!

This guy knows APPLES and you will to if you read and follow this book.

In this book Michael Phillips conveys his years of experience in organic orcharding and integrated pest management. What a nice break from the typical heavy pesticide spraying routings that are typically touted for a backyard orchard! By paying attention to the plant and organism cycles in the orchard, you can give nature a helping hand to produce great tasting and healthy fruit. The methods presented don't necessarily result in perfect looking fruit, but then again, most perfect-looking

grocery fruit is light on flavor. One suggestion for the next edition: It would be really helpful to see tables that summarize pest and orchard management tasks in a way that easily translates to application in an orchard. For example, organizing by season so a home grower can pick up the book and easily assess what tasks should be done in winter, spring, summer and fall. Also consider reading Gaia's Garden for additional information on how you can help nature along with tasks like pest control, weed control and fertilization.

I am a professional orchardist and I love this book

Great book, although I feel it could be a little more specific and organized in regards to planning/planting an orchard. Some answers I really had to hunt for and some just weren't there. But great resource overall.

I learned a lot from this book, and some times also enjoyed it as literature. I think the writer is an artist and a philosopher, not just an apple grower!

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