Community orchards handbook

By Sue Clifford and Angela King

No. of copies: 1

Since the 1950s we have lost 60 per cent of our orchards through development or neglect, and even though there are 3,000 varieties of apple in England, we import 70 per cent of apples sold in shops. Despite this loss there is a growing interest in establishing community orchards - local projects run by local people, providing locally grown fruits and nuts. The Community Orchards Handbook shows groups and individuals how to start their own community orchard, from getting support, tackling legal issues and access to organising working parties and selling produce. It gives suggestions on 'apple mapping' and saving local varieties, and of course it gives practical advice on planting, harvesting and safeguarding your orchard. It includes a comprehensive resources section and examples of successful community orchard projects across the UK.

Reviews

I bought this book for our community group (we are hoping to develop a community orchard) and this book is essential. It has everything you need and more - plus lovely illustrations. I am so glad that Common Ground found the time to put together this very useful and inspiring book. Thank you!

Common Ground have consistently championed Community Orchards as both a living celebration of local distinctiveness and a reminder of a more resilient age in terms of food security. In the days before our supermarkets became full of imported, tasteless Granny Smiths and Golden Delicious, we grew over 3000 apple varieties of UK origin, but what now has happened to the Norfolk Biffen, the Chelmsford Wonder and Beauty Of Bath? This wonderful handbook distils the knowledge and experience of the dedicated enthusiasts and volunteers who are preserving these precious genetic resources for a future when diversity and distinctiveness are once again valued. Packed full of case studies and practical advice, the topics covered include setting up a successful steering group, advice on planning, planting and establishing orchard management regimes, through to attracting wildlife, utilising harvests and involving the wider community through events and festivals (apple pressing and cider making days can combine the latter two)! There’s also useful appendices containing specimen constitutions and legal documents, sources of grants and funding and plenty of contacts and resources. Something I’ve always enjoyed about Common Ground publications is their high aesthetic standards, and this book is no exception. Its illustrated throughout with beautiful colour photos that in themselves are a delight to peruse, but at the same time the spiral binding and heavy stock paper make it a practical volume for field use.

From young pips do not grow true apple varieties. For anyone contemplating a valuable community orchard project this book should be your companion - it's informative, practical and constructive. It contains the inspirational that will help galvanise the community but it also usefully covers the minutiae of small practical matters that may never enter the mind but nonetheless need to be tackled. Alongside the practical, there's a well-paced coverage of the history, tradition and values of orchards and pointers to source material, websites and case studies which remain helpful and relevant. Thoroughly recommend it as a book to help with the process, but if you want to find out more about particular species then Sue Clifford and Angela King's "Apple Source" book is a great companion tome.
The Fruit Tree Handbook

By Ben Pike

No. of copies: 2

The Fruit Tree Handbook is a clear, practical guide for both amateur and expert. It explains all you need to know in order to grow delicious fruit, from designing your orchard and planting your trees to harvesting your produce. Apples, pears, plums, cherries, apricots, peaches and nectarines, as well as less common fruits such as mulberries, medlars and figs, are covered in detail, with recommended varieties of each.

Fruit tree expert Ben Pike describes all the pest and disease problems you may encounter and advises on how to deal with them. He explains about choosing rootstocks and suitable varieties for your needs, and illuminates the mysteries of pruning with step-by-step instructions and detailed diagrams. The book features beautiful colour pictures throughout.

The Fruit Tree Handbook conveys a deep respect for the natural world, showing how to cultivate healthy trees through good management, and also includes chapters on restoring an old orchard and setting up a community orchard.

Whether you are planting one or two trees in your garden or 50 trees in a field; or whether you need help with pruning your apple tree or advice on looking after a victoria plum tree, this book provides the expert guidance you need and you can look forward to being rewarded with basketfuls of luscious fruit at harvest time.

Reviews

I’m absolutely delighted with the fruit tree handbook! I am restoring a 12 acre plum orchard on Scotland and grafting new plum, apple and pear trees for it, so I have been speculatively buying books on the subject for some time and have been reasonably disappointed with their content - they tend toward either watered-down beginner guides or stodgy great lumps of text. This book was a revelation! I Not only is it produced to a really high quality with full-colour photos and diagrams but the material is comprehensive and well written. Sections on orchard layout, pruning, pest control and recommended varieties are geared to suit everyone from gardeners who want to plant a couple of trees to someone like me who has a bigger acreage in mind and there is a section specifically for community orchards. I particularly like the sequential training diagrams for growing espaliers, cordons, step-overs and the like. Ben Pike should be very proud of his efforts in his first book. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in growing top fruit on any scale. Really excellent!

An excellent book - very informative. I consider myself to be a novice, but find the explanations of quite complex ideas such as rootstock choice and pollination partners explained clearly and concisely. I would recommend this to others.

This book is one that all gardeners should have. It takes the mystique out of pruning, gives clear instructions, photos and diagrams and tells you when, where, why, which and how to set about and be successful at the daunting process of pruning for amateur gardeners such as myself. Many thanks to the author and publisher!
How to store your garden produce

By Piers Warren

No. of copies: 1

What can you do with a glut of tomatoes? How do you bottle plums and string onions? What can you do that is interesting with all those huge marrows? How do you keep potatoes through the winter? With less than an acre of garden you can grow enough produce to feed a family of four for a year, but as much of the produce will ripen simultaneously in the summer, most of it will go to waste without proper storage and you’ll be off to the shops again. How to Store Your Garden Produce the key to self-sufficiency is packed with ideas for making your produce last for months and helping you embrace the wonderful world of self-sufficiency. Here are simple and enjoyable techniques for bottling, clamping, fermenting, drying, freezing, salting and vacuum packing, as well as delicious recipes for jams, jellies, pickles and chutneys, relishes and ketchups, fruit butters and cheeses. With this book, you will know where your food has come from, you will save money, there will be no packaging and you’ll be eating the best produce you can eat your own.

Reviews

I have managed to read most of the ways to store garden produce suggested in this book. Nothing is outside the realms of possibility, very clearly written advice. The suggested recipes for chutney, jam, wine, etc. are easy to follow, although you do have to refer back to the advice in the first half of the book, but once you get the hang of it, it makes sense. I would recommend this for those who are new to home production of fruit and veg, and don’t want to throw anything away.

How did I manage without this book? My colleagues at work regularly share our surplus produce from our gardens and allotments. This book has provided much needed inspiration for us. The plum chutney recipe is a real winner! The second edition is much improved with many more recipes. I shall not be short of ideas this summer!

I’ve found this book absolutely clear and informative for step by step procedures for storing and preserving excess garden produce. It’s easy to understand, even for the novice gardener like myself - none of the instructions are too complicated to follow from storing potatoes to wine making. It covers produce that are commonly grown in today’s gardens/allotments however large or small the plot may be. The recipes are wonderful and are certainly worth a try even if you aren’t a gardener. I would recommend this very clever book to gardeners and cooks alike.
Fruit

By Mark Diacono

No. of copies: 1

Growing fruit at home is a delicious and altogether more enjoyable alternative to buying it in the shops. Mark Diacono offers a practical and accessible guide to making the most of your garden and what it has to offer. The first part of the book is an A-Z of the different varieties of fruit, with old favourites like apples, cherries, plums, blackcurrants, white currants, redcurrants, strawberries, blueberries, gooseberries, raspberries and rhubarb as well as more exotic species like figs, grapes, cranberries, Japanese wine berries and apricots. Each is accompanied by a photograph, with detailed advice on when and how to grow and harvest. In the second part of the book, Mark gives straightforward guidelines on techniques like pruning and training, as well as how to deal with problems or pests. There is a section dedicated to growing under covers and in containers. Introduced by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and with 30 delicious recipes, beautiful, full-colour photographs and a directory of useful addresses, this is the ideal reference for any aspiring fruit grower.

This beautifully illustrated book is a lyrically persuasive yet highly practical and extensive guide to growing and using your own fruit; it is an invaluable addition to the library of a keen gardener, Vigo customer, and connoisseur of delicious food. Mark Diacono runs his own organic fruit farm and plant nursery at Otter Farm, East Devon. He leads the garden team at River Cottage where he also runs courses and thus has a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. Mark covers how to choose what fruit you grow, the choice of varieties suitable for your garden, the tools required and essential terms and techniques of cultivation. This is followed by an exhaustive A – Z of fruit. It is easy to appreciate why Mark has won so many prestigious national awards for his knowledge and the clarity of his writing makes this book a real joy to read.

Reviews

A wonderful book filled with loads of useful information on how to look after your fruit trees/plants and how to get the best out of the plant. The book explains about the traditional ways of growing fruit like the apple/pear tree grown in the fan or espalier, I like the fact that it is all down in easy to understand format not confusing or hard work to put in place. The book is also good for starting your own small fruit garden, it explains how to do the work and how and what you would need to do before and after you have planted the fruit trees. Well worth the money for a good informative book from people who really like growing their own, would recommend.

A super little book, well written, plenty of relevant easy to read and understandable information, good pictures and drawings and the right handy size to use out in the garden. Everything you need to know to grow and enjoy your own fruit, a book that I’m sure we will go back to and use time after time. Happy to have been converted to this River Cottage series.
**Craft cider making**

By Andrew Lea

No. of copies: 2

Craft Cider Making is a definitive guide to artisan cider-making. Andrew Lea is a leading authority on cider making with 20 years’ experience as a hobby cider maker. Andrew is food biochemist, who worked for many years at the Long Ashton Research Station (The National Fruit & Cider Institute). This book is an invaluable guide to making good cider and apple juice, as well as growing apple trees. Whether you have a couple of trees in your back garden or several acres of orchard this is the book for you! The book encompasses all aspects of cider making including: cider making history, selection of equipment, choice of fruit trees, their cultivation and orchard management and also techniques of juicing and fermentation including the use of yeast.

Further sections of the book include:

- Customising cider - blending, techniques for producing sparkling cider including carbonation, bottle conditioning and the 'champagne method', cask conditioning and the production of sweet ciders including the French and English tradition of 'keeving'.
- When things go wrong - problem identification and problem solutions including what to do with 'stuck' fermentations, 'off' flavours, hazes & deposits and information about fining and filtration.
- Apple juice making, preservation and storage
- Cider vinegar production Perry making

The book includes photographs, a helpful index, and there are useful tables including ...

- Composition of apple juice
- Vintage cider apple cultivars and their properties
- Sugar content / specific gravity / potential alcohol
- Addition of sulphur dioxide / Campden tablets
- CO2 pressure and bottling advice
- Cider fining with bentonite and gelatin

**Reviews**

Andrew Lea’s book is a fantastic resource for the home and “up and coming” craft cider maker alike. Given Andrew’s history in the trade as a biochemist as well as running his own hobby orchard, he provide a plethora of information for the science geeks as well as the newcomer. In particular, the highlights on cider faults and also sulphiting and pH are brilliant. Of the 10+ cider books/manuals I own, I value this one the most.

Just enough science to make you feel you understand some of the chemistry that goes on during pressing and fermentation. The author certainly knows his stuff and if you want only one book on the subject, this is it.

I only started cider making a year ago, and bought the book “real cider making on a small scale” which is very good, this book however is the bible of cider making, Andrew Lea spent many years working at the Long Ashton research station, in the cider section and even longer making his own cider, for the amateur or professional it tells you the legal requirements, how to customise, and what to do when things go wrong it really is the book to own if you make your own cider.
Making craft cider

By Simon Mckie

No. of copies: 2

A well organised and attractively presented book written by Simon McKie, a keen amateur cider maker with 30 years' experience making cider for home use. Making Craft Cider was written for the benefit of fellow domestic “ciderists”. The author writes about the history of cider and also reflects on his own practice of cider making, discussing apple selection and harvesting, pressing (using both hand and mechanical mills and presses), and the process of cider making from fermentation through to bottling. Written from an amateur’s perspective, the book provides an invaluable insight into issues of interest and concern to domestic ciderists. The book is highly recommended by Liz Copas, Cider Pomologist at Long Ashton Research Station, Orcharding Advisor for the National Association of Cider makers, and author of ‘Apples - The New Pomona’.

The book includes the following helpful sections:

- The processes of making cider from the pressed juice from a range of apples with differing properties - issues of measurement of specific gravity, adjusting potential alcohol, testing for acidity and the use of additives, test kits and blending are all clearly & helpfully described;
- The techniques of making cider and the process and the progress of fermentation, including the effects of temperature variation and malolactic fermentation;
- Storage and dispensation of the cider;
- The style and sweetness of the end product;
- Bottling and pasteurisation;
- The production of bottle conditioned & sparkling cider (Méthode Champenoise)
- An overview of cider brandy making
- The legal aspects of production Issues to do with the sale of cider
- Festivities relating to cider making

The book has very useful appendices including ... 

- a glossary of terms
- comprehensive lists of equipment used
- a troubleshooting section
- a guide to tasting methodology
- a chart designed to record particular batches of cider production with quality and tasting notes.

Reviews

The title could not be more accurate. This charming booking about the intricacies of Craft Cider making is a perfect read for any keen amateur ciderist. Informative, clear and thoughtful, Simon Mckie has written a book that is the perfect accompaniment to any home cider brewing endeavour. Not only this, the book is also a fascinating read for the concise history of craft cider making, and the obvious enthusiasm of the author. The book will appeal to any keen ciderist but also, if stumbled upon by a complete novice, is sure to spark an interest in craft cider that has hitherto lain dormant.
Making Jellied Preserves From Garden and Hedgerow Fruit

By Caroline Pakenham

No. of copies: 1

Making Jellied Preserves is the ideal book that will delight the enthusiastic kitchen gardener keen to make their own preserves from readily available wild and garden produce; just what many of our customers have been asking for! The book contains 76 recipes for delicious jellies that have been collected and made by the author during her long career as a home preserver. Some recipes are simple pure fruit jellies whilst others combine interesting and at times exotic ingredients to make exceedingly special preserves worthy of any 'haute cuisine' table. These include: Cider Jelly; Sloe, Almond & Sloe Gin Jelly; Chianti and Redcurrant Jelly; Winter Spiced Plum & Port Jelly and very many more! An ideal companion to any of our Steaming Juicing Equipment; indeed Caroline uses and recommends the Mehu-Liisa Fruit Steamer and says of it: 'It isn't too expensive and I would highly recommend it as a juicer and a steamer for all soft and stoned fruits in making jellies' (page 17, Making Jellied Preserves).

The book includes full colour photos to help you recognise hedgerow fruits, plus numerous recipes for fruits that you can gather from spring to autumn or buy from further afield, including:

- Gooseberry with perfumed wild Elderflower jelly
- Crab apple jelly
- Seville orange jelly
- Sloe jelly
- Plum and Rosemary jelly
- Claret and Sage jelly
- Garlic and herb Jellies
- Elizabethan Quince Cream
- Spiced cranberry with roasted orange jelly.

Also included are lots of ideas for using your wonderful store of jellies in your cooking.

Reviews

So many food books are strong on glossy pictures and weak on practical information. Mrs Pakenham's 'Making Jellied Preserves' is a good looking book but it is also supremely practical. The list of equipment will help those new to making jellied preserves and doesn't break the bank with designer gadgets more suitable for display than use. Its plain from the picture on page 12 that the authoress has been making jellied preserves from an early age. She enthusiastically shares the knowledge and experience of a long lifetime in her recipes including some, such as 'Hedgerow and Sloe Gin' and 'Plum and rosemary', which have a distinctly old world ring to them. Other recipes, 'guava', 'Sweet red pepper and chilli' and 'kumquat and Seville', are more contemporary and exotic.

This excellent book contains useful advice on what to do when things go wrong and the legal constraints on food foraging. It also has an interesting historical section in which a strong underpinning of personal experience enlivens the narrative. I should strongly recommend this book to anyone who wants a practical guide to making jellied preserves—and yes it has very pretty pictures.
Preserves

By Pam Corbin

No. of copies: 2

This book is an authoritative, colourfully illustrated and easy to read practical guide to preserving fruit, vegetables and herbs for use all the year round. The author Pam Corbin started the artisan jam making company Thursday Cottage Preserves and is also an active member of Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall’s River Cottage teaching team and in this book she very generously shares her expertise built on more than 25 years of practical experience. There are 5 comprehensive chapters focused on: Jams & Jellies, Pickles, Chutneys & Relishes, Cordials, Fruit Liqueurs & Vinegars, Bottled Fruits Sauces, Ketchups & Oil-based Preserves. Preserves is essential reading for the enthusiastic and discerning kitchen gardener and is especially relevant for customers who own a Mehu Liisa Fruit Steamer or the Stainless Steel or Enamel Pasteuriser.

Pam starts with a national overview of “seasonal bounty” of both cultivated and wild produce that includes a useful timetable of seasonal availability then goes on to clearly describe the essential rules and requirements of successful preservation. The introduction to each section describes the principles of the process including the essential ingredients needed and is followed by a mouth-wateringly tempting set of recipes.

Features include ...

- Illustrated throughout with full colour photographs
- 8 useful charts including:
  - Seasonal and regional availability
  - Individual process requirements and shelf life guidance
  - Pasteurising timetables
  - Conversion charts etc.

It is packed with recipes.

Reviews

Hugh Fearney-Whittingstall hired Pam Corbin to organise River Cottage's Preserving Days, and she's done him proud with this handbook. She's fairly strongly pro-bottling, pickling and general jamming, and is keen to remind us that’s just how life was, not very long ago. For her, preserving is not just a fun activity, it’s a way of using up seasonal gluts and honouring the ebb and flow of the vegetable world.

She’s meticulous on health and safety in a modern up-to-date way, and there’s some really useful stuff I’ve never seen before, like sterilising, filling and sealing tables - chutneys are treated slightly differently than marmalades etc, which makes you feel in incredibly safe hands. And three different tests for setting! Encyclopedic!

Of course the real test is the recipes, which others have already recommended. I like the fact that each one is on its own page, that the design is beautiful, and that there’s lots of illustrations to tempt me. I also like the seasonal advice that tells you when to make a particular preserve. Also, Pam suggests tempting useful variations to each (Whiskey marmalade; Indian spices like fenugreek in the rhubarb relish; pickled crab apples instead of pears).

Things I was delighted to know how to make: passata; harissa; quince jelly (for manchego); Italian figs in mustard sauce. Things I am amazed to know how to make: hawthorn ketchup; compost heap jelly; nasturtium capers; fruit “leather”.
Pruning and training

By Christopher Brickell and David Joyce

No. of copies: 2

This guide to pruning and training contains, in just one volume, the information gardeners need to maintain attractive, well-pruned and trained trees, shrubs, climbers, roses and fruit. 800 ornamental plants and fruits are covered. The different plant groups are covered in separate chapters, each beginning with a clear introduction explaining the general principles. Colour illustrations with step-by-step instructions are included for exemplary genera to illustrate standard pruning techniques and methods of special training. There follows an extensive A-Z of genera and species, containing detailed information about the particular needs of each plant. To explain the more unusual or difficult techniques, special "feature" pages - on such topics as topiary, hedging, bonsai, pleaching and pinch pruning are interspersed throughout the book.

Reviews

This is the most helpful pruning book I have found, ever! Very comprehensive and, for the home gardener, a must. Whether you are a gardener just starting out or a seasoned 'expert', this book with great pictures and illustrations guides you through what to do and when to do it. The book is categorised in a way you can find the type of shrub or tree, bush or vine you need to review and then the directions are very clear. I recommend this book whole-heartedly.

I've been looking at this book for years, checked it out from the library several times, and finally decided to pick up a copy of my own. We have several varieties of fruit trees, soft fruit bushes, brambles, roses, etc. in our yard and while I already knew the basics for most of our plants, I really like having a guide to refer to (for when I mix up what's best for our cherry trees and apple trees). Grapes were my weak point and I learned how best to prune them for production from here. I'm not strictly following any of the styles here for our vines, but I have the information I need to get the result I was looking for. The instructions are clear, the illustrations are helpful, and the pictures are high-quality. For those less-familiar with pruning, this guide is a great place to start; for those who already know what they're doing, this is a good reference to fall back on.
The grafter’s handbook

By R.J. Garner

No. of copies: 1

This is almost the definitive guide to grafting covering a broad variety of practical techniques which is an invaluable guide to anyone wishing to propagate their own trees. Although the style and presentation of the book may appear somewhat dated the information is very comprehensive and it is regarded by many as the classic reference book on the subject.

Chapters include:

- Rootstocks and their propagation;
- The collection and treatment of scion wood;
- Tools and accessories
- Grafting methods: both rind grafts and cleft grafts;
- Grafting established trees.

This book is highly recommended to both those wishing to try grafting for the first time and those with experience who wish to try a range of different techniques to suit the plant material they have available.

Reviews

“I have read many grafting books, this one is the one I have been looking for as it goes into great detail, granted some of the info is dated but I have found it relevant.”

“A really definitive volume on all aspects of grafting, an essential edition to any serious gardener’s library, highly recommended to anyone starting out with plant grafting.”

“Most images are rather grainy black and white photos. Much of the content looks dated. For example, the author writes in depth about raffia for tying grafts, with no mention of Parafilm or Buddy tape. No mention of the temperature graphs relating to temperature v. grafting success; this would be useful for any beginner, as would a chart of optimum temperatures for all varieties normally grafted. There are references, but in different places in the book.”

“The Grafter’s Handbook has long been viewed as the encyclopedia of plant propagation by grafting. Everything the dedicated amateur, the student or the professional horticulturist wants to know about grafting can be found here. Even though it was originally published in 1947, it has been continually updated through 1988.”

“The meat of book is in the chapter, “Methods of Grafting.” The author has limited his selection of detached-scion techniques--90 pages of different methods--to those that are practical and interesting. He begins with a description of the different approach-graft methods and then moves from the simple to more complex detached-scion grafting methods. He clearly explains each step through text and line drawings and often suggests when to use what and what doesn’t necessarily work. The description of tying methods is so detailed that no one should ever again have to worry about this part of the process.”
A Cornish pomona

By James Evans and Mary Martin

No. of copies: 1

A Cornish Pomona lists dozens of varieties, from Adam’s Pearmain to Zennor Beauty. Describing their size, colour, flavour, uses, heritage, cropping, location of specimen and a host of other details – including which ones have now been added to the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale in Kent – the authors’ original research contributes hugely to our knowledge of the subject.

As well as recording the various varieties, the authors began their own orchard of native trees 21 years ago. Then, in 2007, they established an eight-acre “Mother Orchard” on the National Trust’s Cotehele estate. Containing 300 trees representing 120 varieties, this living collection will ensure that the surviving West Country apple types will continue to thrive.

The book is a colourful blend of apple descriptions and fragments of local history and it fills the needs of the enthusiastic gardener and those interested in supplying the regional market. If you prefer your apples uncontaminated by spray residues and available seasonally in great diversity, rather than the bland uniformity of supermarket ‘choice’, then this is an essential guide to choosing your new trees.

The handbook details one hundred and seventy varieties with a wide range of flavours and uses; all are disease resistant in the moist climate of the South West. It records a natural gene-pool so valuable that it should be part of the continuing evolution of The Apple at this time of increasing extremes.

Reviews

“A Cornish Pomona is a beautifully designed and produced book, which is both informative and entertaining and will hopefully also stand as a symbolic milestone in the movement away from globalism and back to localism.”

“Some might question the purpose of building an apple collection, but the answer is simple. With worldwide commercial production dominated by a small number of varieties – Golden Delicious, Gala, Pink Lady, Sunrise – the genetic risk of disease from such uniformity is enormous. Compare this to the disease-resistant qualities of apple trees developed and nurtured to flourish in specific soil conditions and climates. A Cornish Pomona lists more than 170 varieties that remain robust in the moist conditions of the South West.”

“Over twenty years James and Mary, aided by other Cornish apple enthusiasts, have searched the county for old varieties. Most they rescued at the eleventh hour; most of their original sources of information are now dead and even the following generation is getting old.”
A community orchard is a collection of fruit trees shared by communities and growing in publicly accessible areas such as public greenspaces, parks, schools, churchyards, allotments or, in the US, abandoned lots. Such orchards are a shared resource and not managed for personal or business profit. Income may be generated to sustain the orchard as a charity, community interest company, or other non-profit structure. What they have in common is that they are cared for by a community of people.