

Celebrate Johnny Appleseed Day - Sept. 26

Apples, Cider and More

One of America's fondest legends is that of Johnny Appleseed, a folk hero and pioneer apple farmer in the 1800s. This legendary figure was based on the life of a real man, John Chapman, born in Leominster, Massachusetts on September 26, 1774.

Numerous stories of John depict him as a happy-go-lucky wanderer spreading apple seeds randomly as he traveled the countryside. Research suggests that his plantings were more thoughtful than that. Reportedly, Chapman would select available land, plant a nursery of apple trees from seed, fence it in and come back every year or two to tend the ground and sell the trees. He planted these apple nurseries across Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and perhaps as far west as Illinois and north into Michigan and Wisconsin.



He not only loved apples, he loved animals of all kinds, including insects and was said to be a vegetarian, living on food provided by nature and never killing animals.

Chapman preferred to barter and trade food or clothing rather than collect money for his apples or trees. To him, it was more important that a settler plant a tree than pay him for it.

Although there are conflicting sources about the exact date of his death, multiple Indiana newspapers reported Johnny "Appleseed" Chapman died at the age of 70 on March 18, 1845 at the home of a friend in Fort Wayne.

Celebrating Johnny Appleseed Day is best done by treating yourself to the delicious fruit that he helped to spread across the countryside. Whether you enjoy apple cider or juice, apples baked into a tart or pie, or just biting into a crisp apple, take a minute to appreciate John Chapman - better known as Johnny Appleseed.

On average, New York State apple growers produce 29.5 million bushels apples per year making it the second-largest apple producing state in the country. Only Washington State produces more apples than the Empire State.

For more facts on New York State apples visit the New York Apple Association website at <http://www.nyapplecountry.com/about/facts>

For educational resources from the NYS Agriculture in the Classroom go to <https://www.agclassroom.org/ny/programs/literacy.htm>

Newspaper Activities:

Pull out your favorite apple recipe. Draw each step in the recipe's directions as a newspaper comic strip. Download a helpful graphic organizer at <http://www.nynpa.com/nie/AppleRecipeComicGO.pdf>

Look through the newspaper for advertisements of apples. What is the best price you can find?

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