

# The Greening of Rhode Island: Ins and outs of our state fruit

The state fruit of this here place is the **Rhode Island Greening apple**, which you latin speakers might recognize as *Malus Domestica*. This tender crispy tart apple, with creamy and firm flesh, is renowned for its deliciousness in pies, sauces, and as a source for apple cider and even apple champagne.

An old Rhode Island legend has it that, in the 1700's, one Metcalf Bowler came upon a Rhode Island Greening sapling in a small porcelain pot by way of a sea captain, who had rescued some prince of Persia, who as thanks for his safety, bestowed this small tree on his rescuer. Mr Bowler, it is said, is the gent who sat down with Lafayette and Washington and wooed them away from French wine with the much tastier apple champagne.

More likely is the story that, sometime in the 1650's, Mr. Green of Portsmouth, Rhode Island domesticated the variety in the back garden of his Inn there, known as Greene's Inn.

This story has the mutation of "Greene's Inn" to "greening" as the origin of the varietal's name.

Regardless of origins and its fading recognition this state fruit is still grown in Rhode Island. Steere Orchard is one place that advertises availability.

Remember, it is best as a cooking apple—Martha Stewart has declared it her favorite baking apple, but can be enjoyed fresh for it's Granny Smith-like tartness that mellows with winter storage.

As you wander the sweet bounteous orchards of October perhaps you'll keep a nostril open for the tart tell of the elusive Rhode Island Greening.

*Look for the Rhode Island Greening at, Steere Orchard, 150 Austin Ave, Greenville*