



Appealing Apple Applications.MP3

Gary Crawford: [00:00:00] Remember Bette Davis has poor Apple Annie in the movie "Pocketful of Miracles". In that 1961 movie she's selling bright red apples most likely the red delicious variety which at one time in this country was the king of all apples.

Doug Raines: [00:00:20] It was back in the day when people like to buy apples because they looked good.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:24] Doug Raines is a research technician at the Agriculture Department Appalachian fruit research station and Tourney's mill West Virginia. They do all kinds of research work on all kinds of fruit trees including apples and yes, that bright red apple has become an icon hasn't it? Kids and artists almost always portray apples as bright and consistently red. Well it all began back when this song was a big hit.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:47] In 1875 on Jessie Hiatt's farm in Iowa a seed from one of his apple trees must have mutated. It took root and despite efforts to cut it down it kept coming back over and over finally he just let it grow. And 10 years later it produced a crop of beautiful red apples. He later sold what he called the Hawkeye variety to a nursery, which renamed it Red Delicious to compete with the then new Golden Delicious, proclaiming the Redland as the Marvel apple of the age and by the time this song was a hit.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:19] The Chattanooga Choo-Choo. Yes in the 1940s Red Delicious was the most popular Apple and even into the 1980s Red Delicious accounted for about 75 percent of Washington State apple production. And Doug says it wasn't just because it tasted better than the other apples that Frank quite the opposite. And it wasn't just because it was a pretty red apple although the color did have something to do with farmers wanting to grow it.

Doug Raines: [00:01:40] Growers could pick them and get them on the market because they looked like they were ripe. But when people ate them they realized that they really weren't ripe that they hadn't developed enough flavor. They were still very starchy.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:50] The red color was there regardless of the ripeness. So growers could as he said pick those red apples earlier and get them to market sooner get paid quicker. Plus even though maybe the apples were not fully ripe. That was an advantage for long distance shipping.

Doug Raines: [00:02:03] If they pick them when they're not quite ripe.

Doug Raines: [00:02:06] They ship better than apples that are ripe. Probably one of the reasons Red Delicious was so popular was because it was a good shipper. You know it could travel from the West Coast to the east coast and still arrive at the stores in pretty good shape.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:16] Sometimes they'd be ripe when shoppers bought them and would taste pretty good. Other times not so good. And finally in the late 1990s the red delicious variety began to lose market share. Production dropped 40 percent. And Doug says,

Doug Raines: [00:02:29] With farmers markets and things like that in a lot of growers are picking fruit that's tree ripe and then people are getting to appreciate what fruit tastes like when it's fully mature and ripe. So slowly, over time, people are becoming educated and finding, other options to write delicious.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:45] Sweet ones like.

Doug Raines: [00:02:46] Golden Delicious Honeycrisp Fuji's galas Jonagold sweet.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:49] And on and on Red Delicious still the most common apples grown in the U.S. but over 60 percent of those apples are now shipped to other countries.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:56] Gary Crawford for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington.