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Not Adam's apple!

New farm product reduces need for preservatives

When Adam took a bite of the forbidden fruit the world changed forever. Researchers hope that "Eden" will once again create change—or at least change the way we make fresh and dried apple slices, ice apple cider, apple wines and apple products.

"Eden" is a new Canadian hybrid dessert apple. "Improved firmness and crispness," the advertisements say, but Eden's real selling feature is its ability to stay white after slicing. Other non-browning and low browning apples include Imperial Gala, Ambrosia and Sabina. "Eden," however, stays white for four to five days and is hardy to minus twenty-five. Browning is increased if the apples are stored for over three months. Non-browning apples are also the focus of research in Japan and New York. Japan's new apple is waiting for a patent but it is reported to stay white weeks after slicing.

"Eden" or SJCA38R6A74 was developed by Dr. Shahrokh Khanizadeh, a research scientist with Horticultural Research and Development, in Quebec, using the traditional breeding techniques of pollen transfer. It is a hybrid of Linda and Jonamac and intended for use in fruit salad, dried apple chips and apple processing.

Alberta Agriculture and Food did a Consumer Trends study in 2002. They found Canadians will pay more for quality and the organic market is pushing sales up. Eighty-five percent of Canadians are concerned about additives. By fruit preference, Canadians eat bananas, apples and then oranges to a total of 205 pounds of fruit per person per year. The big news was fruit consumption is up fifteen percent and mixed juice consumption increased twenty-four percent in ten years!

Developed to help Canadian farmers gain a piece of this tremendous market, "Eden" allows processing of apples without the chemicals used

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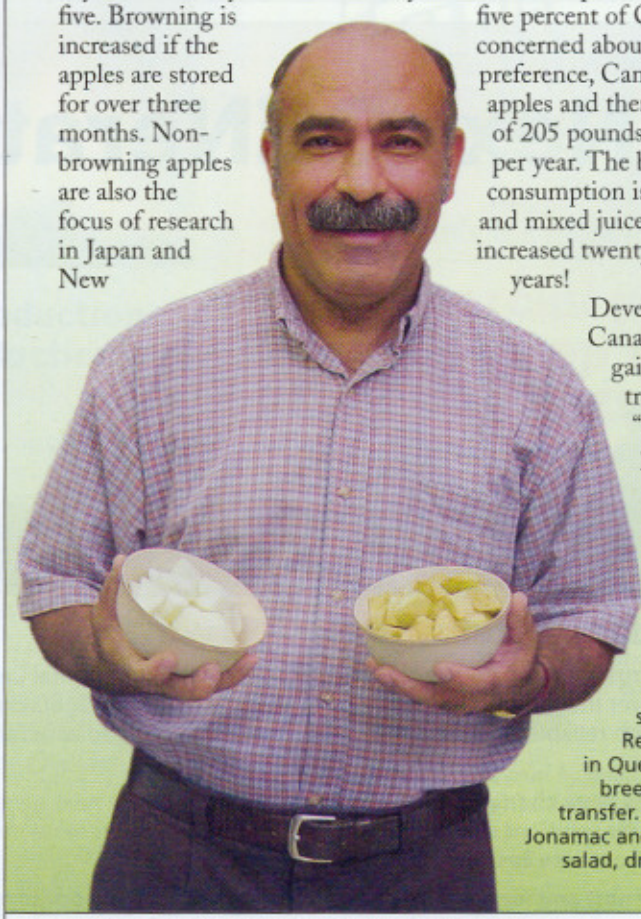

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to prevent browning. In Canada, "FreshXtend" prevents browning. This is a "Gras" product or "generally regarded as safe" with no known links to cancer. The ingredients are a trade secret, (known to Health Canada) but it is thought to contain citric acid. The American product "NatureSeal" contains Vitamin "C" and calcium. Both are dissolved in water and the fruit is dipped in the solution.

Fruit naturally contains a wealth of healthy ingredients and encouraging people to consume more is always a good plan. These natural chemicals give fruit its flavour, colour and (in this case, epicatechin) make apples turn brown. Removing the natural epicatechin from apples prevents browning. Dr. Vasantha Rupasinghe, Asst. Professor, BioProduct Research Chair from Nova Scotia Agricultural College, explained it is like removing flour from bread. If you don't have all the ingredients it just doesn't happen. Dr Rupasinghe's article on the nutrient listing of "Eden" is due for publication in Canadian Journal of Plant Science in 2008. He says, "Eden's" other micronutrients, minerals and vitamins are all equivalent to traditional breeds of apples. The bad news is epicatechin is known to be an excellent antioxidant, it prevents cancer.

A secondary advantage to "Eden" apple trees is their ability to hold their fruit long after frost. They are known to hold the apples even at minus twenty degrees Celsius making it an excellent source for ice apple wine and ice apple cider.

"Eden" is not expected to replace traditional apples. It is to encourage more people to eat more apples by providing the fruit in chemical free accessible formats increasing the market for Canadian farmers.

"Eden" is not expected to replace traditional apples. It is to encourage more people to eat more apples by providing the fruit in chemical free accessible formats increasing the market for Canadian farmers.

To obtain a license to sell "Eden" or bud wood from (CFIA), Canadian Food Inspection Agency you must contact the office of intellectual properly and request a license. A license will be prepared and signed by both parties, (farmer/ nursery and AAFC). Once AAFC receives a copy, CFIA is informed and the order is processed. This should not take more than 2-3 weeks and costs one dollar per bud.

You can also obtain Eden trees from licensed nurseries in Quebec like Les Vergers Rochon Enr. Marcel.rochon@sympatico.ca (450) 258-4659. Marcel is sold out for 2008 but is accepting orders for 2009.

~P. Kerr

Photos courtesy of Shahrokh Khanizadeh, www.khanizadeh.info

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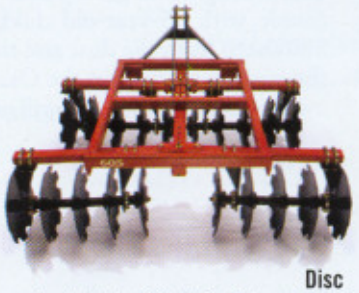

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