

Hoover Apples | Ark of Taste Nomination Form

PRODUCT NAME

Hoover apples (also called Wataugua, Black Coal, Thunderbolt, Black Hover, and Baltimore Red)

CATEGORY

Fresh and dried fruit

COUNTRY

United States of America



PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Hoover is large in size with a roundish, slightly conical shape. This heirloom variety has a striking appearance since the skin is composed of two shades of intense, dark red (sometimes making the skin appear black). The skin is also covered with large dots. The Hoover has yellowish flesh which is fairly juicy with a slightly acidic flavor.

PRODUCT HISTORY

The earliest known written account about the origin of the Hoover dates to the 1856 catalog of Pomaria Nurseries (Pomaria, SC). This catalog indicates that the Hoover was a seedling from Edisto, SC and was cultivated by a Mr. Hoover in Edisto, SC. While Hoover apples are now grown throughout the country, they have close ties to the culinary traditions of South Carolina. Originating in Edisto, this apple variety has a strong historical and cultural link to South Carolina since the mid-1800s, particularly since it grows well in South Carolina soils.

The Hoover ripens between the months of September and October. However, because the Hoover keeps well for many months, these apples can be enjoyed from September-October to March. Due to their ability to store well, Hoover apples could be used for several months without preserving. While generally eaten fresh, Hoover apples can also be cooked and are especially good in apple butter or apple sauce.

HISTORICAL PRODUCTION AREA

By receiving a grant from Slow Food USA and RAFTA, Slow Food Clemson University in South Carolina was able to plant 20 heirloom apple trees on Clemson University's campus. One of the varieties chosen was the Hoover due to its close ties to the state of South Carolina and ability to withstand South Carolina soils. With the help of the Student Organic Farm staff, we hope to re-introduce Hoover apples into the state of South Carolina and encourage more producers to consider raising this endangered apple variety. It is also grown in North Carolina.

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FOR WHAT REASON IS THIS PRODUCT OR BREED AT RISK OF DISAPPEARING?

Due to the lack of genetic diversity in apples, Hoover apples are at an increased risk of becoming endangered. Many growers would rather plant apple varieties such as Red Delicious, Granny Smith, or Gala than heirloom varieties due to consumer demand and increased risk of plant diseases. However, with increased focus on taste education and sustainable apple growing methods, heirloom apples such as the Hoover could become more appreciated by the global food community and saved from food extinction.

When grown by producers interested in preserving their unique flavors, striking physical beauty, and biological integrity, the Hoover qualifies as a “good, clean, fair” product. While many sustainable growers are unaware of how to best cultivate heirloom apples such as the Hoover, workshops about heirloom apple cultivation and planting practices utilizing sustainable methods could be used to ensure reintroduction of the apples into the food community. By promoting Hoover apples at farmers markets, gardens, and farms, with proper signage indicating their unique qualities, we hope to increase the availability and accessibility of these apples to consumers.

IS THE PRODUCT FOR SALE ON THE MARKET?

Producers of Hoover apples cultivate the trees by using rootstock. Most of these rootstocks are either semi-dwarf or dwarf. The type of rootstock chosen is generally picked based on climate, soil, and geographical region of the planting site.

Producer: Big Horse Creek Farms
Name: Ron and Suzanne Joyner
Address: Big Horse Creek Farm
P.O. Box 70
Lansing, NC 28643
E-mail: Oldapple@bighorsecreekfarm.com
Relative Commercial Size: Apple farm and nursery producing more than 350 varieties of apples including many heirloom varieties

Producer: Century Farms
Name: David C. Vernon
Address: Century Farms
P.O. Box 271
Altamahaw, NC 27202
Phone Number: 336-349-5709
E-mail: david@centuryfarmorchards.com
Relative Commercial Size: Apple orchard selling about 500 apple varieties but only a few Hoover trees per year

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Producer: Clemson University Student Organic Farm
Name: Shawn Jadrnicek
Address: 190 Field Station Drive
Clemson, SC 29534
E-mail: sjadrni@clemson.edu
Relative Commercial Size: 15 acre certified organic farm with 10 heirloom apple trees
(several of which are Hoover)

NAME OF PERSON SUPPLYING THE APPLICATION

Mary Carney, Slow Food Upstate, South Carolina

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Joyner, Ron & Suzanne. Apple Variety Descriptions. 3 February 2013.
<<http://www.bighorsecreekfarm.com/descriptions1.htm>>

Vernon, David C. Century Farms. 3 February 2013.
<<http://www.centuryfarmorchards.com>>

Calhoun, C.L. (2010). Old Southern Apples: A Comprehensive History and Description of Varieties for Collectors, Growers, and Fruit Enthusiats. White River Junction: Chelsea Green Publishing.