

Growing Orchard Communities

COMMUNITY ORCHARD TOOLKIT



How to preserve apple juice

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Fresh apple juice will keep in the refrigerator for two to three days before it begins to ferment or go bad. If you have a lot of juice from your pressing day it is important to find ways of saving the juice so it does not get wasted. For a community orchard group, it is a bonus to be able to serve apple juice from the orchard when volunteers come and help with the pruning and maintaining of the trees during the year.

Juice may be stored for longer periods by:

Making cider (not the subject of this document)

Freezing Juice can be frozen for months without any appreciable loss of flavour.

Tip 1 - saving space in freezer from Vigopresses.co.uk - Cut the top off an empty fruit juice carton, place a polythene bag inside, fill with juice, tie the top of the bag and freeze. Once frozen, the bag can be removed from the box and you have a brick of juice, which can be stacked in your freezer. One cubic foot will hold over five gallons.

Tip 2 – in Plymouth we saved juice from several Apple Pressing Days and froze them before having a pasteurising event. It can be very hectic to do it on the same day as the pressing as you need a lot of extra people. This way it can be a calmer, more relaxed event when you have time!

Pasteurising makes a world of difference to the length of time you can store your juice. Fresh apple juice will keep in the fridge for 2 to 3 days before it begins to ferment or go off, but if pasteurised can be stored for anything up to 2 years.

Careful pasteurisation will kill off any organisms that could cause spoilage of the juice whilst preserving its fresh apple flavour. Pasteurising involves carefully heating the juice or cider to 75°C and holding at this temperature for 25 minutes. This kills any organisms that could cause spoilage of the juice whilst preserving its fresh apple flavour. It can be difficult to do using a hob and a pan (with a grid in the bottom to keep the bottles off the base) and can result in juice with a cooked apple flavour or juice that is not properly pasteurised. Orchard Link hires out purpose built pasteurisers with both thermostats and timers for pasteurising juice in the bottle.

What you need

- Glass bottles with good caps. You can re-use the bottles many times but you need new caps each time, since you need to make a perfect seal.
- A pasteuriser (Orchard Link have 2 pasteurisers which you can hire for £10 a day)
- A thermometer with a probe to reach into the bottles.
- A good pair of thick rubber gloves, ideally with roughened palms.

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- A funnel.

Procedure

Please note - Fruit used to make the juice should be clean and well washed and free from any dirt, mould or decay. It can be small or misshapen, maybe slightly scabby or cracked, but it must in all respects be fit for eating. Making juice is not a way of using up inedible fruit.

- Fill clean glass bottles with juice. Leave a gap at the top to allow for expansion of the juice when heated.
- Place them in the pasteuriser with the tops on loosely except for one which will have the thermometer in (supplied by Orchard Link with the pasteuriser). Fill the tank with water to the required level and set the pasteuriser to 75°C.
- Replace the plastic lid.
- Set the timer on the pasteuriser to 25 minutes. Once the juice inside the bottles has reached temperature, the timer will start to count down, but double check with the thermometer that it is 75%
- When the timer reaches zero, using rubber gloves, tighten the caps on the bottles and carefully remove the bottles.

Lay the bottles on their side while cooling, so the hot juice can sterilise the inside of the cap and the bottle neck. This also creates a partial vacuum during cooling which should draw the cap ever tighter onto the seal. All the yeasts inside the bottle are killed by the heat, and if the seal is good then no more can get in.

The pasteurisers hold 13 x 75cl bottles so juice can be bottled in large batches with ease. The shelf life of bottle, pasteurised juice should be 1 – 2 years.