

Apple varieties suitable for organic cultivation in Estonia

Problem

Organic apple production faces many disease and pest control challenges. While the use of direct control measures is limited, indirect control, such as the choice of robust cultivars, is pivotal. However, only a few winter-hardy varieties, mostly local breeds, are available in Northern Europe.

Solution

This practice abstract lists the robust cultivars tolerant to apple scab, powdery mildew, and fire blight that are suitable for the Baltic region.

Benefits

The use of the recommended robust apple cultivars can help to control the main diseases and contribute to the reduction of plant protection products.

Practical recommendation

- Check information about local cultivars tested at research stations and established orchards. Talk to your retailers. Ask yourself the following questions to choose a suitable variety for your context of production:
 - Do I want to produce table apples or cider apples?
 - Which palette of varieties regarding the taste do I want to offer?
 - Which harvesting times do I want to cover?
 - Do I want to sell the apples to a retailer or direct marketing? If you want to sell to a retailer, check which varieties they accept before planting. If you want to do direct marketing, consider having a broad palette of varieties covering all taste groups and a long selling period.
 - Do I have storage capacities?
- Even cultivars described as scab resistant may develop a scab race that can break down the resistance. Always control apple scab¹ from bud break and at big infections peak in the primary ascospore discharge period.
- Even robust cultivars against apple scab do not significantly reduce the need for treatments. There is always the risk of other diseases, such as sooty blotch.
- List of cultivars for organic apple production suited in Estonia:
 - Summer cultivars: White Transparent, Kasper, Martsipan
 - Autumn cultivars: Liivi kuldrenett, Krista (Picture 1), Tiina, Liivika (Picture 2)
 - Winter cultivars: Katre (Picture 3), Talvenauding (Picture 4), Virve, Alesja

Applicability box

Theme

Crop production, Horticulture, Temperate fruits

Keywords

Temperate fruits, Disease prevention

Context

Baltic states

Application time

Planting of trees best in autumn



Picture 1: Apple autumn cultivar Krista of Estonian origin. Photo: Polli Horticultural Research Centre



Picture 2: Apple autumn cultivar Liivika of Estonian origin. Photo: Polli Horticultural Research Centre



Picture 3: Apple winter cultivar Katre of Estonian origin. Photo: Polli Horticultural Research Centre



Picture 4: Apple winter cultivar Talvenauding.

Photo: Polli Horticultural Research Centre

Further information

Weblinks

- Recommendations of National Programme: “Collection and Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture” for organic growers
- Estonian Research Centre of Organic Farming
- Polli Horticulture Research Centre
- 1. Apple scab (Venturia inaequalis): Control strategy for organic pome production. Practice Abstract, BIOFRUIT-NET
- Check the Organic Farm Knowledge platform for more practical recommendations.

About this practice abstract

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