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Apples of Inverness County by ?rika Du Bois, Maboti Orchards are certainly not a conspicuous feature of Inverness County, but these often dilapidated stands of trees contain some really delicious 19th Century Apples pretty well extinct in the rest of Canada and regarded today as collectors' items. These worthy old trees have proven their toughness through half a htmdred winters and still bear plentifully, if biennially. All of these old varieties are specially suited to a home orchard where flavour, quality and season are more important than the ability to tolerate lengthy shipping or gas storage. At least 40 named varieties are to be found in Inverness County. Most have been grown here for three generations or more; all were of long-established reputation when they were planted. Some are of very ancient origin. Probably many were introduced by Royalist settlers from New Bngland, and others from England via Nova Scotia. It would be interesting to know where the scions came from that made the first grafted trees. Among them are dessert apples of surpassing excellence, such as the rich-flavoured and handsome Ribston Pippin. This apple originated in Yorkshire a- round 1700 and was well-known in Nova Scotia. It is a large orange-red apple often streaked or netted with some russet and with yellow crisp flesh of a peculiar . orangey flavour. If you wish to enjoy this apple you must grow it yourself, though its parent, the nutty little Golden Russet may still be seen in markets in winter. This and the Tolman Sweet were the two most widely planted apples of the 19th Cen? tury. The tree usually gives a crop yearly, and like all russets it is an exception? ally long keeper, often lasting in the cellar through May. One cannot speak of flavour without mentioning the Snow Apple, or Fameuse. Ready a- bout Hallowe'en, this 'famous' eating apple was a great favourite in old New England and it is very often found in association with a Royalist community. Unfortunately, it is always very scarred by the scab fungus to which it and all members of its group (Macintosh is one) are susceptible. Snow Apples are a sure thing for jelly, and as even blemished fruit will do for this purpose, they are still prized. Of roughly the same season is the Gravenstein, a really luscious apple. Not the new Red Gravenstein, but the old creamy-yellow, red-stippled type is the one to plant for flavour. The tree is not altogether hardy here, and the old ones which survive are often those which have been grafted onto stems of another tougher sort. Not a long keeper, it should be used up in its season which is not difficult, as t.he tree has a convenient habit of dropping its fruit little by little, sometimes the last fruits hanging on for a month. Farm orchards were planted to provide a good deal of late fruit which would store reliably. Most of the trees in any old orchard should be late fall or winter apples and rather few of them, early ones. Four splendid earlies were widely planted here and at least one of these can generally be found in every orchard. They are all ex? tremely hardy. The first to ripen, around mid-August, is the Crimson Beauty. It makes fine, hot-pink applesauce. Next is the Yellow Transparent, juicy and delicate. A little later the aromatic Red Astrachan and the tart and juicy Duchess of Olden? burg fill in until the mid-season apples such as Gravenstein are ready. The apples of the later fall can be deceptive to the



inexperienced. Many later apples do not ripen until they have been a certain time in storage. Others of this season are 'specifically cooking types and both of these sorts can be very disappointing when eaten out of hand or too early. In the following groups are some examples: The Alexander is an apple of Russian origin; it and the others of its family are very hardy and all have huge, shapely, bright-coloured fruit with a flowery fragrance. Wolf River, an American seedling of Alexander, is an even better cooking apple than its parent and was frequently planted. Red June and Emperor Alexander add excellent keeping qualities to this group's virtues. Emperor Alexander is the one good dessert fruit. And they are all often lovely to look at, their heavy fruit eventually giving a permanent droop to the limbs. Maiden's Blush, a tart, fine-textured cooking apple, was almost always included in an orchard of the past. It is a smooth and lovely yellow, blushing rich pink on its sunny side. Of proven hardiness, this variety was the only one to withstand the harsh winter of 1934 in a friend's Ontario orchard. The yellow Hurlbut has a rich pear-like flavour, is good to eat as well as cook and keeps through March. Wealthy, one of the toughest, bears brilliant red fruit which keeps good color and flavour until May. A neighbor highly recommends an apple he grows called Bokum (Boiken). It is a very reliable keeper and unlike some winter apples, makes excellent applesauce. Cape Breton's Magazine/14