

MSU Fruit Team Apple Maturity Report 2014

Northwest Region, Report Number 1: September 10, 2014

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Gingergolds and SweeTango harvest is underway in northwest Michigan.

Apple harvest began last week in northwest Michigan and overall quality in most orchards looks good so far. Although we continue to see declining trees due to winter damage, we have had a season with generally low pest pressure and have received few reports of problems due to insects and disease. We received a significant amount of rainfall late last week, 3.25 inches over two days have helped size fruit; overall fruit size is larger than normal so far this season. Predicted temperatures for the coming week are cool, in the upper 50s to mid 60s. Rain is in the forecast on Saturday, but cooler sunny days are mostly predicted for the coming week, which will be comfortable for picking apples. Paulareds, Gingergolds, and SweeTango are the main focus of harvest at this time and many growers began picking these varieties slightly early in anticipation of a long apple harvest due to cool spring temperatures that have delayed apple maturity and a potentially short fall that is predicted for this season. We have started maturity testing on Galas, McIntosh, and Honeycrisp; however, these varieties are still too starchy when eaten straight from the tree and are not ready for fresh market.

Summary of northwest Michigan apple maturity samples taken on 8 September 2014

Variety	Color % (range)	Firmness lbs. pressure (range)	Starch (range)	Brix (range)
Gingergold	7.5 (0 – 30)	17.4 (14 – 21.5)	2.7 (1 – 3)	12.7 (11.5 – 14.2)
Gala	50 (30 – 100)	21.49 (18.5 – 23.5)	1.1 (1 – 2)	10.13 (9.0 – 12.0)
McIntosh	81 (50 – 90)	18.7 (12.5 – 22)	1.0 (1 – 4)	9.93 (9.5 – 13.4)
Honeycrisp	44.8 (5 – 80)	17.1 (14.5 – 21)	1.2 (1 – 1.5)	11.2 (9.5 – 12.5)

Gingergold – Mature (1 samples). Many growers started harvesting this variety last week and harvest is ongoing.

Gala – Not mature (2 samples). Galas are still very firm and firmness is at 21.49 lbs this week, down from 23.15 last week. Brix and starch index levels are low and starch index readings should be at least at 2 or 3 for long-term CA storage. Overall size in Gala is good considering this variety has a tendency to be small. We have observed small fruit in Size has been variable in orchards and fruit are smaller in orchards where adequate thinning was not achieved programs did not thin well.

McIntosh – Not mature (2 samples). Firmness is at 18.7 lbs, down from 21.75 lbs last week and the starch index is at 1, which is no change from last week. Brix levels are low, at 9.93. There are few reports of apples pushing off so far this season.

Honeycrisp – Not mature (2 samples). Firmness is at 17.1 lbs, down from last week at 19.1 lbs. Starch index is at 1.2 and brix level is at 11.2. There is a significant range in percentage of color at this time 5 – 80%.

