Cornell Orchards: Where learning grows

You come for the apples, cider, fresh produce and other goods. But Cornell Orchards is first and foremost a research and teaching site serving the Department of Horticulture, other departments in Cornell’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and local area schools.

Researching environmentally friendly practices
The goal of our research is to develop environmentally friendly, sustainable practices that provide consumers with healthy, high-quality fruit and help growers flourish. Research highlights include:

- Identifying pest- and disease-resistant fruit and testing biological pest controls.
- Studying soil quality and how it affects the health of plants.
- Extending the harvest, early and late.
- Trialing new berry crops and growing methods.
- Assessing biodiversity of native apple pollinators.
- Studying the effects of groundwater cover crops on soil, grapes and wine quality.

Teaching the next generation
14 courses use the Orchards as a living lab, giving future generations of growers and researchers hands-on experience with all aspects of fruit production.

Reaching out to the community
Every fall, more than 1,000 schoolchildren visit the Orchards to taste apples, see how cider is made, and learn about where fruit comes from.

The Orchard Store
Buy apples, our house-made cider, other fresh fruit, produce from our vegetable research farm in Freeville, Cornell maple syrup, honey, Cornell Dairy products, specialty foods, gifts and more. Sales support our teaching and research.

709 Dryden Rd. (Route 366)
Across from the Vet School
Open late August to early May
www.hort.cornell.edu/orchards

By the numbers

In Cornell dining rooms:
- Tons of apples served during the 2013-2014 academic year: 30
- Gallons of cider distributed on campus: 20,000

Education and research:
- Outreach participants annually, including schoolchildren, fruit growers & others: >1,000
- Courses using the site as a living lab: 14
- Faculty (from 3 departments) conducting research on site: 10
- Graduate students conducting research on site: 8
- Cornell Orchards interns in 2014: 5

Ithaca orchard:
- Total acres: 37
- Acres of apples: 15
- Age of the 11 oldest trees: >100 years
- Acres of grapes, berries & plums: 9

Lansing orchard:
- Total acres: 100
- Acres of apples: 25
- Acres of pears, grapes, cherries, chestnuts, peaches, kiwifruit & pawpaws: 7.5

Above: Viticulture and enology students pick grapes and make wine from dozens of varieties planted at Cornell Orchards. They also learn sustainable practices managing a 500-vine block that is certified organic.

Right: Students in the course Hands-on Horticulture for Gardeners learn to prune apple trees.

Above: Growers learn about how to extend the strawberry harvest season at a berry crop field day. Left, we store apples in a cool, low-oxygen environment to help keep locally grown fruit fresher, longer – practices pioneered at Cornell. We are refining new techniques to keep apples crisp after removing them from storage. Below, making cider at the Orchards.