

2012 PREDICTED APPLE HARVEST DATES

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We have the least confidence in our predicted harvest dates for 2012 more than any other year of previous predictions. The winter was warm and the spring early with full bloom being as much as 5 weeks ahead on normal in the south and 4 weeks ahead on normal in the north. Numerous nights of frost and freeze events killed primary bloom (bloom born of 2 year wood and older) and most of any secondary bloom (bloom born of 1 year old wood) in most of the state, particularly the south half to the state. Some areas however had apples survive these adverse conditions. Frost and freeze events moved in around the bloom period for most of the state and thus most primary bloom were killed. These cold conditions stretched out the bloom period over 2 to 3 weeks. The predicted harvest dates are based on primary full bloom dates and not secondary bloom dates. Fruit of secondary bloom will mature up to 7 days after these dates.

2012 predicted harvest dates (Table 1) are between 14 and 30 days ahead of normal. These predicted harvest dates are for the center or peak harvest of these varieties for CA storage. Since these predicted harvest dates are based on primary bloom, growers with bloom that survived the frost may mature this early, however, most frost surviving fruit is from bloom at least a week later than these dates. Thus, the predicted dates have been adjusted by 7 days later and listed in Table 3 (adjusted 2012 predicted date).

Gala is notorious for ripening early when late summer temperatures are above normal. Light crops will mature a few days earlier. Other varieties are less prone to hot temperatures advancing fall maturity. Still other varieties ripen when cold temperatures occur near harvest time.

The normal harvest dates for other varieties are listed in Table 3 for the Grand Rapids area. This year's 2012 predicted dates and adjusted predicted dates are a rough estimate based on the McIntosh, Jonathan and Red Delicious predicted dates. Other areas of the state should adjust non-predicted varieties based on their own history. Using a 30 days before harvest 2012 predicted harvest date to time applications of ReTain should be adjusted a few days later for fruit from secondary bloom and heavy crop-loads. Light crop-loads, hot summer weather, and fruit from primary bloom should be adjusted earlier.

Table 1. 2012 predicted peak harvest dates

Station	Full bloom date			Predicted harvest date			Observer
	McIntosh	Jons	Reds	McIntosh	Jons	Reds	
SWMREC	3/31	4/2	4/3	8/9	8/28	9/4	Shane
Deerfield	4/12	4/15	4/15	8/19	9/13	9/19	Tritten
Romeo	4/17	4/19	4/20	8/23	9/15	9/21	Tritten
Peach Ridge	4/11	4/14	4/15	8/20	9/11	9/20	Schwallier
Hart	4/15	4/18	4/19	8/23	9/18	9/23	Schwallier
NWMHRS	4/25	4/30	5/1	8/30	9/20	9/27	Rothwell

Table 2. 2012 predicted peak harvest dates compared to normal and last year

Station	Days ahead of normal			Days ahead of last year		
	McIntosh	Jons	Reds	McIntosh	Jons	Reds
SWMREC	29	24	24	34	29	28
Deerfield	20	8	13	27	16	16
Romeo	21	10	12	25	17	17
Peach Ridge	25	15	14	27	18	16
Ludington	26	15	21	28	16	17
NWMHRS	23	16	20	25	20	19

Table 3. Normal peak harvest dates for varieties for the Grand Rapids area.

Variety	Normal date	2012 predicted date	Adjusted 2012 predicted date
Paulared	8/24	7/29	8/5
Gingergold	8/26	7/31	8/7
Gala	9/10	8/15	8/22
McIntosh	9/15	8/20	8/27
Honeycrisp	9/18	8/23	8/30
Empire	9/22	8/27	9/3
Jonathan	9/28	9/11	9/18
Jonagold	9/28	9/11	9/18
Golden Delicious	10/2	9/15	9/22
Red Delicious	10/5	9/20	9/27
Idared	10/10	9/25	10/2
Rome	10/15	9/30	10/7
Fuji	10/25	10/10	10/17
Braeburn	10/25	10/10	10/17
Goldrush	11/1	10/17	10/24