

BOOK REVIEW

Local authors share cider-making secrets

The Big Book of Cidermaking, by Kirsten and Christopher Shockey

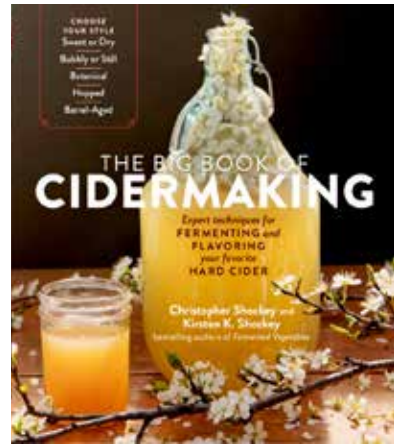
BY HALEY MAY

Is the Applegate the gateway to apples? It is for us locals! Although named after the Applegate Trail, which brought settlers north into Oregon, Applegate also happens to be ideal for cultivating apples. Inexpensive and versatile, they are useful for baking, juicing, and, perhaps most fun of all, fermenting into cider! This fall's arrival of *The Big Book of Cidermaking*, by local authors Kirsten and Christopher Shockey, aligns perfectly with the apple harvest. This latest fermentation book by the Shockeys offers advice for beginners and enthusiasts alike, endless ideas for flavor combinations, and the promise of delicious apple delights to enjoy this year (besides pie, of course).

The authors thoroughly outline the basics, such as bottling and aging cider, as well as its chemistry, and illustrate the process with plenty of colorful photos. Primarily a recipe book, *The Big Book of Cidermaking* caters to all palates, whether for sweet, sparkling, strong, floral, spicy, or even pear-based cider ("perry"). Smaller, themed sections, such as "The Science of Cider," "From a Cellarmaster's Notebook," and "Meet the Cidermakers," make it

fun to flip through the book and read at your own pace. There is a section on our very own Thompson Creek cidery, Apple Outlaw.

You don't need to grow your apples, source them locally, or press them to make your own cider creations. *The Big Book of Cidermaking* tells you how to make cider from standard store-bought apple juice. You need yeast, of course, but did you know you don't have to go out and buy it? If you have an apple source and prefer not to go shopping (which is likely), you can use wild yeasts from the plants around you, bringing flavor and personality to your ciders. For example, you could start with any apple juice and use the yeast from lilac to add a floral element and aid in fermentation. Use kefir or kombucha mothers if you already have them to get your cider off to a unique start. You can even learn to make pomace vinegar with the leftovers if you choose to crush apples yourself.



The Shockeys suggest you could infuse your cider with botanicals, such as manzanita, Oregon grape, and turkey tail mushroom. You might tailor your creation to be a digestive aid, to carry a flavor or aroma you adore, or to add a medicinal element. How about supplying yourself with "fire cider" this season

to boost immunity? Alternatively, you could make "ice cider."

The recipe is accompanied by a quote from Thoreau: "Let the frost come to freeze them first, solid as stones, and then the rain or a warm winter day to thaw them, and they will seem to have borrowed a flavor from heaven."

You could get really "out there" by attempting a "chai-der" (chai cider), chocolate cider, CBD cider or trying a recipe for a fruity cider, such as strawberry or cranberry cider. If alcohol isn't your thing or you want your kids to participate, go for a lightly fermented, "soft-ish" version of the

adult beverage. If you want to go for something more boozy, you could make your own pommeau (brandy), mead, or apple wine.

The book even has a helpful section on tasting cider, so if we are ever able to drink socially again, you can impress your friends with a refined vocabulary and the engagement of all your senses.

A convenient appendix covers troubleshooting, a list of desirable apple varieties, tips for growing your own, and a glossary.

Order now to get your hands on this juicy collection! *The Big Book of Cidermaking* makes a great gift for Christmas this year, a solid addition to your "fermentation station," or a kind donation to your local library for everyone to enjoy. Order the book through Rebel Heart Books in Jacksonville to both support a local business and maybe get your hands on a signed copy. Call Rebel Heart at 541-702-2665. But the book should be available anywhere books are sold.

Happy reading, fermenting, and sipping!

Haley May Peterson
hmaylmt@gmail.com

Each bee-friendly plant has its season

BY DANA LEE

Bees are extremely important to agriculture and thus to our survival. Honey bees were introduced into the United States in 1622 by English colonialists in Virginia, who were dependent upon the bee's wax, honey, royal jelly, propolis, and pollen. Over the centuries, honeybees have established themselves as our most prevalent pollinator, pollinating about 90 different crops or one-third of our food supply.

Oregon has approximately 500 native species of bees. Each species plays a significant role in our wild environment. Bees are the primary pollinators of our indigenous plants and contribute greatly to our agricultural production as well. Our native bee species are extremely efficient pollinators, generally transferring more pollen at a time than honeybees because they tend to spend more time on each flower.

Unfortunately, bee populations have been declining dramatically for decades, primarily as a result of urbanization, industrial farming, monocropping, and copious applications of chemical pesticides. In recent years though, there has been a wide-ranging, concerted effort to "save the bees." There are a few major, yet simple things we can do at home to contribute to this effort. We can eliminate, or at least dramatically reduce, our use of chemical pesticides, preserve native habitat where we can, and provide bees with an abundance of year-round food sources.

Every active bee, buzzing about, is looking for food, and here in the Applegate Valley bees may be active year-round. Below is a seasonal list of bee-friendly plants which grow especially well in our climate and are irresistible to our ravenous bees.

Fall

Fall is a crucial time for bees. They need to gather as much food as possible, before

extended periods of winter hibernation become inevitable: Seven Sons Plant (*Heptacodium miconioides*), Pink Stonecrop (*Sedum 'Thunderhead'*), Canada Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), White Fall Aster (*Symphotrichum novi-belgii 'Chorister'*), Fall Aster (*Aster novae-angliae 'Purple Dome'*) Franklin Tree (*Gordlinia grandiflora*)

Winter

We can sometimes get really lucky with our winter weather here in the Applegate Valley. We often receive multiple days of inexplicably sunny and relatively warm days. These are the days when bees are able to dart about for short periods of time in search of much needed replenishment: Red-Flowered Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis intermedia 'Diane'*), Chinese Sweetbox (*Sarcococca confusa*), Rogue Willow (*Salix lasiolepis 'Rogue'*), Black Pussy Willow (*Salix melanostachys*), Red-Flowered Pussy Willow (*Salix gracilistyla 'Mt. Asama'*), Paperbush (*Edgeworthia chrysantha 'Nanjing Gold'*)

Spring

This is the season in which bees are preparing for the next generation. The majority of our native bees are solitary species, meaning that one female bee alone is responsible for her brooding. Once the female has mated, the nesting site is chosen. The female bee will create one segmented nest for each of her eggs complete with a 'pollen provision' for each of her young. Her offspring will overwinter until spring to then repeat the process. This lifestyle requires a lot of pollen, and on a single spring day one bee may visit 2,000-5,000 flowers!: Strawberry Bush (*Arbutus unedo*), Blue Ceanothus (*Ceanothus 'Blue Jeans'*), Variegated Daphne (*Daphne burkwoodii 'Carol Mackie'*), Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*), Red-Berried Firethorn (*Pyracantha koidzumii 'Santa Cruz'*), Red-Flowered Currant (*Ribes sanguineum 'King Edward VII'*), Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis 'Tuscan Blue'*)



Forestfarm nonprofit nursery in the Applegate sells a variety of bee-friendly plants.

Summer

On hot summer days, safe water sources are as vital to bees as nectar and pollen. There are many simple ways to provide safe places for them to hydrate in your landscape. Bees may help themselves to puddles in watered areas of your landscape. Or another interesting and decorative idea is to place shallow saucers about, filled with marbles and water. The marbles are attractive and provide the bees with perches, for safety from drowning: Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Hupeh Bee-Bee Tree (*Evodia hupehensis*), Basswood/American Linden (*Tilia americana*), Dwarf Little-Leaf Linden (*Tilia cordata 'Lico'*), Hebe (*Hebe prostrata*), Tomato Rose (*Rosa rugosa*), Western Mountain Spirea (*Spirea douglasii*), Cornflower (*Centaurea 'Caramia'*), Large Pink Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea 'Ruby Giant'*).

You can find all of these bee-friendly plants, and many more, at nonprofit Forestfarm Nursery. We are on the beautiful grounds of Pacifica at 14643 Watergap Road, Williams 97544. Open 9 am – 2 pm Monday through Friday. For more information, call 541-846-7269, or go to forestfarm.com.

Dana Lee
danalee.forestfarm@gmail.com



The cornflower (*Centaurea Amethyst Dream*) features a frilly purple flower. Photos: Dana Korzilius.