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MAKING APPLE JUICE

Introduction

The techniques given here will produce high quality juice which can be stored as such, or fermented to wine, hard cider or cyser (honey and apple). In general we will prefer tart and strong flavored varieties for fermentation and sweeter types or a mixture of types for juice to drink. Varieties with medium to firm flesh will generally handle better during processing. Depending upon the juice content and the pressing equipment used, allow about 14 to 20 lbs. of apples per gallon of yield.

If only one or two gallons are planned, hand chopping and squeezing in the wine straining bag will work well enough. For larger amounts and better yield, a hard fruit crusher (grinder) and a fruit press will be needed. While presses will handle the pulp of both hard and soft fruits, the crusher must be made specifically for hard fruits. Attempting to use a grape crusher on hard fruit will likely damage it. Check the manufacturer's recommendations when in doubt. Have on hand adequate open topped food grade containers for the pulp and glass jugs for the juice or fermentation. Refer to the equipment list in *Making Wine At Home* for fermentation equipment. Sanitize all equipment by wetting with sulfite solution before use.

Procedure

1. To protect the juice from wild yeast, bacteria and browning, make a solution in water of ½ teaspoon vitamin C powder and ½ teaspoon sulfite crystals per cup of water. Make enough solution to use one cup for each 50 lb. of apples.
2. Wash the fruit with cold water and remove spoiled or badly bruised fruit.
3. During the grinding, sprinkle the vitamin C/sulfite solution over the ground fruit in a food grade open topped container and stir into the pulp as you go. Do not add any solution to the apples in the crusher - the sulfite can be corrosive to metal crusher parts.
4. Also mix into the crushed pulp, ½ teaspoon pectic enzymes powder for each 15 lbs. of fruit. Cover the container(s) (plastic sheet held over the top with an elastic loop works well) and keep in a cool location for one to two days. During this time the enzymes will "loosen" the fruit for better juice yield.
5. Press the juice from the pulp, using the instructions in *Using The Wine Press*.
6. If the juice will not be fermented, it may be frozen in plastic containers, or it can be held for a time in full glass containers if ½ teaspoon stabilizer (potassium sorbate) per gallon of juice is added to prevent fermentation and it is kept in a cool location.
7. If the juice will be fermented, proceed immediately with the recipe, but omit campden tablets and pectic enzymes since they are already present.