

NEWSLETTER

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I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing. The vacuum was very unsympathetic told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything but the door knob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to yes, you guessed it ...pull myself together.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS IN BENDIGO

A trip to Bendigo in May is worth a visit to see their Chrysanthemum display in the Conservatory Gardens. The gardens date back to 1886 and the old Conservatory was erected in 1897. Here are a few photos from this year's display.



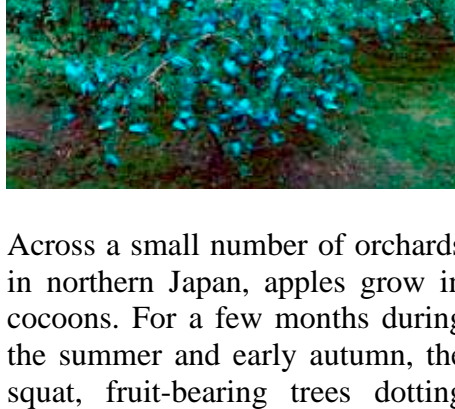
REMINDER NO MEETING

Just a reminder, there will be NO June general meeting. July's newsletter we will give you another update.

MORE COVID-19 INSANITY!!!

Just be careful because people are going crazy from being in lock down! Actually I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and we all agreed that things are getting bad.





tailored bags, each one enshrouding a tiny, cream-colored globe. These are mojie apples in their infancy, and they're quietly growing into canvases. Harnessing the power of the sun—and a sticky stencil to block it—orchardists can turn these pieces of fruit into pieces of art.

Mojie apples can depict just about everything, from the Japanese kanji for good health to the face of a particularly beloved pop star, who allegedly handed them out to his entourage. But according to Chisato Iwasaki, who has been in the business of cultivating mojie apples for more than 20 years, these apples share a common message. “Most of the stencil designs symbolize luck,” he says. “They are often gifted to wish good fortune and prosperity, whether for business or celebratory occasions.”



APPLE STENCILLING

In Japan, the labour-intensive practice of apple stencilling is slowly fading.

In Japan, orchards that produce mojie apples are found mostly in Aomori prefecture, the northernmost prefecture on Honshu, known for its apples. Here, orchardists have been growing gourmet, hand-bagged apples for nearly 200 years. Iwasaki, who grows mojie apples at Iwasaki Farms, learned the process from his father, who began stencilling apples nearly 50 years ago. “He started because he wanted to add value to apples,” he says. “I began working with him to help him achieve that vision.”

Across a small number of orchards in northern Japan, apples grow in cocoons. For a few months during the summer and early autumn, the squat, fruit-bearing trees dotting the landscape dangle small, waxy pouches from their branches. But a closer peek would reveal that these little chambers are carefully

Not just any old apple can become a lucky mojie. Iwasaki says that Mutsu and Stark Jumbo are the best varieties for the job. Not only are they larger and more accommodating for stencilling sprawling images, he explains, but they have smooth skins, facilitating an easy application and removal of the stencils.

But, aside from that, there's nothing easy about the process. Cultivating mojie apples is a high-maintenance labour of love, and it takes nearly an entire year to perfect. Unlike apples grown in the other countries, typically touched once at harvest time, mojie apples are handled 10 to 12 times, by the farmer, before they make it off the tree. The process begins before the apples are even in existence. Beginning as early as January, orchard workers prune the trees, cutting excess branches to protect against overcrowding and ensure that each fruit will receive ample sunlight.

As May approaches, the pale pink apple blossoms begin to open. But the flowers are fleeting: Farmers cull the blossoms on each tree from about 4,000 to 200-400, which gives the apples room to grow as large as possible. The final fruit is 30 percent larger than most apples. The remaining blossoms are pollinated, often by hand, using a fluffy powder puff wand.



In the summer, workers return to the orchards to weed out wonky apples. Deformed and bruised

fruits are plucked away, making room for the more promising apples. The bagging process typically begins in June, when multilayered bags are wrapped and folded cautiously over each maturing apple, shielding it from pests, the elements, and the sun. Keeping the apple out of direct sunlight keeps it a creamy white colour, and increases the photosensitivity of the fruit's skin. According to Ringo Daigaku, online apple education centre, this months-long period of light deprivation means that, once exposed to the sun, the skin will rapidly produce anthocyanin, a pigment that turns the apple a vibrant red.



Once the innermost bag is removed, and the pale, light-deprived fruit gets its first peek at the sun, it's time to stick the stencil onto the skin. While simple designs, such as single characters, can be applied by hand, tweezers are used to apply and remove more complex stencils to each individual fruit.

The stencils used today are stretchy, plastic adhesives, but that wasn't always the case. At first, Iwasaki notes, growers used charcoal to draw characters onto the apple, washing off the design before harvesting. Since then, the stencils have gone through a few iterations, including designs made from Scotch tape and packing tape. The adhesive sheets currently used provide the most flexibility, as they

can bend and stretch with the apple as it grows.



Once the newly-naked, stencil-adorned apples are exposed to the sun, farmers place reflective sheets below the trees to ensure light touches the bottom of the fruits. Growers return to the trees frequently to rotate the apples and ensure they're getting even sunlight.

The successful mojie apples are nothing short of perfect. The stencil is carefully peeled away, revealing a design in the shape of the sun-shielding seal. Sold in decorative boxes, wrapped in plastic along with a cushion, or stacked in four rows on "treasure ships," (small, wooden boats meant to hold piles of mojie apples), they're most often presented as exquisite gifts rather than casual snacks. Only after the artwork has been sufficiently admired should the recipient slice into the fruit.



But sadly, Iwasaki says, these tantalizing treasures may slowly be disappearing. “It is very labour-intensive, so we are slowly decreasing production volume each year,” he says. Between the natural disasters Japan has faced in the past decade, and the shrinking number of young people interested in continuing the work, many orchardists have struggled to get by. Even the traditional bagging process, applied to stencilled and non-stencilled apples alike, is slowly dying out. “I feel like it will disappear in the near future,” Iwasaki says.

But he isn't stopping anytime soon. After 21 years in the business, Iwasaki still finds the fruits of his labour rewarding, despite the tribulations. “I sometimes receive unusual design requests, but I'm happy to receive them,” he says. “It makes me proud that our apples bring happiness to people.”

LEMON DRIZZLE CAKE

This cake will keep in an airtight container for up to one week. You can also freeze it for up to two months. Just wrap it in plastic wrap, then foil, and don't forget to label it!



Prep: 15 Minutes - Cook: 45 Minutes - Serves 10-12

Ingredients

Cooking oil spray, for greasing
250g unsalted butter, softened
250g caster sugar
Finely grated zest of 2 lemons
5 eggs
1 egg yolk

275g self-raising flour, sifted
2 Tbsp lemon juice
90g icing sugar mixture
Extra lemon zest, to decorate

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease a 24.5 x 12cm loaf tin with cooking oil spray, then line base and sides with baking paper. Combine butter, sugar and lemon zest in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat on medium, using paddle attachment, for 5 minutes or until very pale and creamy.

Beat in eggs, 1 at a time, scraping down side after each addition. Add egg yolk. Fold in flour, then spoon mixture into prepared tin. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until cooked when tested with a skewer.

While warm, prick top of cake all over with a fork. Mix lemon juice and icing sugar in a medium bowl, then drizzle over cake. Decorate with extra lemon zest and serve.

GIANT PUMPKIN



This variety of pumpkin is called “Atlantic Giant”.

MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

June: Pat Kilpatrick and Gavin Warner.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

FIND THE WORD

Well, how did you go with finding the word in the last newsletter? The word is –

DOODLE

The word this month has 6 letters. What could it be?

Look at the four pictures for the clue. Answer next newsletter.

