

# IDFTA 2002 Summer Tour— Nova Scotia, Canada



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Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

Nova Scotia is the site of the June 22-25, 2002, IDFTA summer tour. Featured will be apple orchards in the Annapolis Valley as well as tourist sites, including Lunenburg at the east coast and culinary delights of the Canadian Maritime Provinces. For more details see *Compact Fruit Tree* 35(1):4-5. Registration material will be mailed to IDFTA members and also will be available on the IDFTA Web site <[www.idfta.org](http://www.idfta.org)>.

Nova Scotia is a province diverse in both landscape and culture. Settled by the French in 1605 and later taken by the British, Nova Scotia has also seen the influence of Dutch, German and American immigrants. The largest single influx of settlers was 35,000 from New England who wished to remain loyal to the British Crown after the American Revolution.

The province boasts a population of approximately one million, spread over a land area of 21,500 square miles. The main industries are forestry, fishing, manufacturing and tourism.

The ocean affects almost every aspect of life in the province. Tourists who take the time to explore the coastal regions of the province often become enthralled by the rugged beauty of the landscape and the friendly, laid-back mannerisms of the residents.

Apples have been grown in Nova Scotia since its earliest settlement in 1605. The fruit producing area is known as the Annapolis Valley, which is located about 50 miles west of Halifax. The heyday of the apple industry was prior to the Second World War, when the bulk of the fruit was shipped to the British Isles. At that time it was estimated that there were in excess of 30,000 acres of tree fruit. With the loss of the overseas markets after the war, the industry went into a state of decline and acreage has dropped steadily to its present level of 7500 acres and an annual production of 2.5 million bushels. While many bemoan the loss in

acreage, what is being lost, for the most part, is large standard trees of poor strains or obsolete varieties.

The maritime climate is characterized by normally cool summers with regular precipitation. Very few orchards have any form of permanent irrigation. Cool nights and warm days in the early fall make it an ideal climate for producing intense red fruit coloration. Lack of intense heat also results in firm fruit texture at harvest. Always popular since its introduction, McIntosh is still king, with at least 30% of the province's production dedicated to this variety. Alar was not used to a great extent in this area, as McIntosh were usually well colored by harvest time. The province is also home to two pie plants that have created a renewed demand for the Northern Spy variety; thus there are significant new plantings of this variety. The season is too short for Fuji or Granny Smith and, in some years, the season can be marginal for Golden

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Delicious, Cortland, Gravenstein, Spartan and Red Delicious are also important varieties.

Honeycrisp was commercially introduced to Nova Scotia in 1996 and is now one of the most heavily planted varieties. Honeycrisp develops an intense red coloration in Nova Scotia, experiencing very little problem with bitter-pit or sunburn. Jonagold is still being planted, as it is well colored, firm textured and stores very well under our conditions. Gala is being planted, with the striped strains being preferred by the consumer. Size has been a problem with varieties such as Gala and Empire due to the low heat units in our climate.

Plantings of the Malling series of semi-dwarf rootstocks began in the 1970s, and any new plantings in that era were based on these rootstocks. Many of these plantings were widely spaced and never filled their allotted space, thus low productivity has plagued the industry to the present day. The 1990s have seen a renewed interest in the apple industry, with a ready acceptance of the close spacings and dwarfing stocks. This tour will focus on a number of plantings and growers that best demonstrate what is needed for success in this climate.

The tour will be centered around the Old Orchard Inn in Wolfville, with bus tours departing from there. A Sunday tour will explore some of the scenic areas outside the apple growing area. Monday and Tuesday will be dedicated to the orchards and historical sites of the Annapolis Valley. A lobster supper and casual barbeque also will be part of the program.

Travelers are encouraged to extend their stay with us to explore other scenic areas of the province such as the Cape Breton Highlands or to travel to the neighboring province of Prince Edward Island which is famous for its white sand beaches, deep sea fishing and abundant golf courses.

Hope to see you there.