

## **SCHWARTZ ORCHARDS WINS ILLINOIS CIDER CONTESTS**

Dr. Elizabeth Wahle, Cider Contest Coordinator  
University of Illinois Extension Educator

The Illinois State Horticulture Society sponsored its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Illinois Cider Contest, held in conjunction with the Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference on January 9<sup>th</sup> in Springfield, Illinois. Schwartz Orchards, located at Centralia, IL, produced the No.1 overall rated cider at this year's contest, repeating his 2008 win in both the National and Illinois contests. Tom Schwartz pressed his winning cider for this year's contests with a bladder press using only Jonathan apples.

Second Place Illinois and National Cider went to last year's winner, Pat Curran of Curran's Orchard in Rockford, IL. Keith and Denise Boggio of Boggio's Orchard & Produce at Grandville, IL took home 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the National Cider and Illinois Contests. Midwest Cider of Merit, 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up, was awarded to Joe Ringhausen of Joe Ringhausen Orchards at Fielden, IL. Trevor and Gary Grissom of Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard at Greenup, IL, was awarded the Midwest Cider of Merit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up, and the Midwest Cider of Merit, 3<sup>rd</sup> Runner-up, went to Raoul Bergersen of Valley Orchard at Winnebago, IL.

Judges evaluated the entries using a 25- point rating scale for cider quality characteristics. The judges conducted "blind" evaluations where only a randomly chosen sample number identified each cider entry. The judging team was made up of a diverse group, including: Richard Breckenridge, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency; Scott Knight, Growmark; Bill Wright, cider enthusiast; Harry Alten, Illinois Specialty Growers Association; Jim Shannon, Miller Chemical & Fertilizer Corp.; Ben Wright, United Phosphorus Inc.; Craig Musselman, Albaugh Inc.; Joe Wanken, DuPont; Patrick Steppuhn, Hummert International; and Andrew Gunther, Southern FS. The Illinois State Horticultural Society (ISHS) has annually conducted the contest since the contest started in 1990. The contest presents awards in three different categories: National, Illinois, and Midwest Cider of Merit. National awards are open to all US producers, and Illinois awards are open to all Illinois producers. The Midwest Cider of Merit awards are open to Illinois producers plus producers from other adjoining states that do not place in the National or Illinois categories.

ISHS also sponsored the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Hard Cider Contest where contestants vied for the top honor. Trevor and Dalton Grissom from Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard at Greenup, IL, was awarded the Champion Hard Cider Award, using a blend of Fuji, Mutsu, Idared, Golden Delicious, and Red Delicious. Each hard cider was individually awarded points based on characteristics like clarity, color, bouquet, balance of alcohol, acidity, sweetness, sugar/acid balance, body, flavor, astringency and bitterness, any off-flavors, and the overall quality.

The ISHS gratefully acknowledges the dedication and hard work of our judging team. Plus a special thanks to Sangamon County Master Gardeners Bill Budd, Steve and Sharon Petrelli, Jane Morris and Barb Hedden for their help running the contest. Thank you! Most importantly, thanks are extended to all who entered the contest this year. Start planning now for the next contest in 2015.

A summary of more contest notes is outlined below.

<b>National Awards</b>	Firm	Address	Cultivar Blend
First Place	Schwartz Orchards	Centralia, IL	Jonathan
Second Place	Curran's Orchard	Rockford, IL	Golden Delicious, Jonathan, Jonagold, Empire, Northern Spy, and Honeycrisp
Third Place	Boggio's Orchard and Produce	Granville, IL	Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Jonathan, and Empire
<b>Illinois Awards</b>			
First Place	Schwartz Orchards	Centralia, IL	See above
Second Place	Curran's Orchard	Rockford, IL	See above
Third Place	Boggio's Orchard and Produce	Granville, IL	See Above
<b>Midwest Cider of Merit</b>			
First Runner-up	Joe Ringhausen Orchard	Fielden, IL	Johnathan, Firmgold, Red Delicious, Arkansas Black
Second Runner-up	Grissom Lost Creek Orchard	Greenup, IL	Fuji, Mutsu, Jonagold, Golden Delicious, and Idared
Third Runner-up	Valley Orchard	Winnebago, IL	Golden Delicious, Jonathan, Idared, and SunCrisp
<b>Hard Cider</b>			
Champion	Grissom Lost Creek Orchard	Greenup, IL	Fuji, Mutsu, Idared, Golden Delicious, and Red Delicious