

GRISSOM'S LOST CREEK ORCHARDS SWEEPS 2015 ILLINOIS CIDER CONTESTS

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The Illinois State Horticulture Society sponsored its 26 annual Illinois and National Sweet Cider Contests and the 13th annual National Hard Cider Contest, held in conjunction with the Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism and Organic Conference on January 8 in Springfield, Illinois. Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard of Greenup, IL became the second orchard in the history of the contests to win the top prize in all three categories; 1st Place National Cider, 1st Place Illinois Cider and Champion Hard Cider. This is the Grissom's 1st time winning the National and Illinois Cider Contests and the 4th time winning the Hard Cider Contest. 2015 also marks the 50th anniversary of Gary Grissom opening Lost Creek Orchard, so it is extra special that the making of the winning ciders involved three generations of Grissoms—Gary, his son Trevor, and Trevor's son Dalton. Their winning sweet cider was a blend of GoldRush, Jonathan, Fuji, Golden Delicious and Wolf River apples and their winning hard cider was a blend of GoldRush, Jonagold, Golden Delicious, Fuji and Mutsu apples. The sweet cider is a mainstay at Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard, but the hard cider is an amateur hobby for the personal enjoyment of themselves, family and friends.

Second Place Illinois Cider and 2nd Place National Cider went to Mike and Brian Edwards of Edwards Apple Orchard West of Winnebago, IL. Keith and Denise Boggio of Boggio's Orchard & Produce in Granville, IL won Third Place Illinois Cider. Kaneb Orchards, LLC of Massena, NY won 3rd Place National Cider. Midwest Cider of Merit 1st Runner-up was awarded to Pat Curran of Curran's Orchard in Rockford, IL. Joe Ringhausen of Joe Ringhausen Orchards in Fieldon, IL was awarded the Midwest Cider of Merit 2nd Runner-up and the Midwest Cider of Merit 3rd Runner-up went to Scott Doll of Doll's Orchard in Pocahontas, 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 Illinois State Horticultural Society (ISHS) has annually conducted the sweet cider contest since the contest started in 1990. The sweet cider 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. Hard entries were each 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. Thank you! Most importantly, thanks are extended to all who entered the contest this year. Start planning now for the next contest in 2016.

A summary of more contest notes is outlined below.

National Awards	Firm	Address	Cultivar Blend
First Place	Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard	Greenup, IL	GoldRush, Jonathan, Fuji, Golden Delicious, Wolf River
Second Place	Edwards Apple Orchard West	Winnebago, IL	Gala, Golden Delicious, Jonamac, Red Delicious, Honeycrisp, Jonagold
Third Place	Kaneb Orchards LLC	Massena, NY	McIntosh, Mutsu, Empire, Honeycrisp, Purple Passion, Russet, BriteMac, Red Delicious, Idared
Illinois Awards			
First Place	Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard	Greenup, IL	see above
Second Place	Edwards Apple Orchard West	Winnebago, IL	see above
Third Place	Boggio's Orchard & Produce	Granville, IL	Jonagold, Jonathan, Red Delicious, Golden delicious, Honeycrisp
Midwest Cider of Merit			
First Runner-up	Doll's Orchard	Pocahontas, IL	Jonathan, Honeycrisp
Second Runner-up	Joe Ringhausen Orchards	Fieldon, IL	Jonathan, Firmgold, Fuji, Mutsu
Third Runner-up	Curran's Orchard	Rockford, IL	Red Delicious, Yellow Delicious, Jonagold, Empire, Jonathan, Honeycrisp
Hard Cider			
Champion	Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard		GoldRush, Jonagold, Golden delicious, Fuji, Mutsu