

GRISSOM'S LOST CREEK ORCHARDS SWEEPS 2017 ILLINOIS CIDER CONTESTS

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The Illinois State Horticulture Society sponsored its 28th annual Illinois and National Sweet Cider Contests and the 15th annual National Hard Cider Contest, held in conjunction with the Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism and Organic Conference on January 12 in Springfield, Illinois. Gary and Trevor Grissom of Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard in Greenup, IL repeated their 2015 sweep of the top prize in all three categories; First Place National Cider, First Place Illinois Cider and Champion Hard Cider. This is Grissom's second time winning the National and Illinois Cider Contests and the sixth time winning the Hard Cider Contest. Lost Creek Orchards winning sweet cider was a blend of GoldRush, Jonathan, Mutsu and Jonagold apples and their winning hard cider was a blend of GoldRush, Mutsu, Jonathan, Melrose and Fuji 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 Second Place National Cider went to Pat Curran of Curran's Orchard in Rockford, IL. Mike and Brian Edwards of Edwards Apple Orchard West in Winnebago, IL won Third Place Illinois Cider and Third Place National Cider. Midwest Cider of Merit First Runner-up went to Tom Schwartz of Schwartz Orchard in Centralia, IL. Raoul Bergersen of Valley Orchard in Winnebago, IL took home the Midwest Cider of Merit Second Runner-up, and the Midwest Cider of Merit Third Runner-up went to Keith and Denise Boggio of Boggio's Orchard & Produce in Granville, 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 who are members of the Illinois State Horticulture Society. 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.

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, Mutsu and Jonagold
Second Place	Curran's Orchard	Rockford, IL	Jonagold, Honeycrisp, Jonathan and Cortland
Third Place	Edwards Apple Orchard West	Winnebago, IL	Jonathan, Gala, Red Delicious and Jonagold
Illinois Awards			
First Place	Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard	Greenup, IL	see above
Second Place	Curran's Orchard	Rockford, IL	see above
Third Place	Edwards Apple Orchard West	Winnebago, IL	See above
Midwest Cider of Merit			
First Runner-up	Boggio's Orchard & Produce	Granville, IL	Jonathan, Golden Delicious and Honeycrisp
Second Runner-up	Valley Orchard	Winnebago, IL	Cameo, Yellow Delicious, Rome and Winesap
Third Runner-up	Tom Schwartz	Centralia, IL	Red Delicious, and Jonathan
Hard Cider			
Champion	Grissom's Lost Creek Orchard	Greenup, IL	GoldRush, Mutsu, Jonathan, Melrose and Fuji