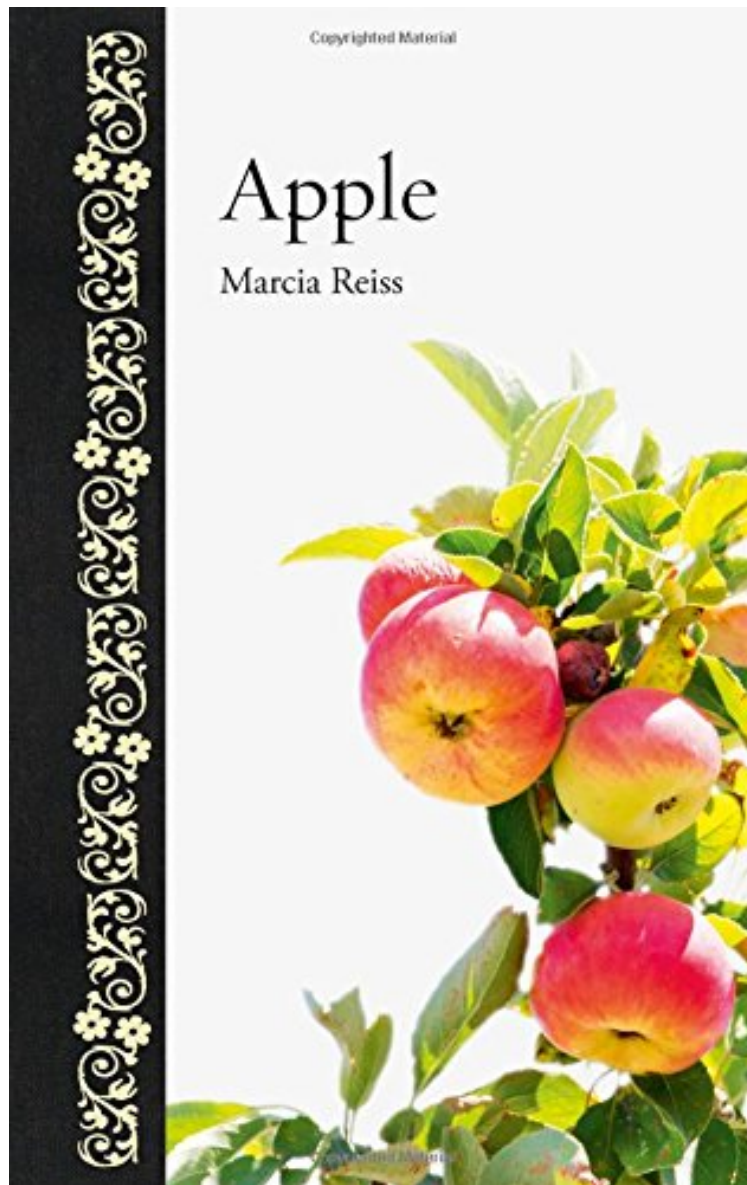


Apple (Botanical)

Marcia Reiss

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Marcia Reiss : Apple (Botanical) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Apple (Botanical):

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The apple of her eyeBy lyndonbrechtI am a fan of Reaktion Books and their many series--no, I am not on the payroll, and no, they have not sent me books to review. I happened on some in my local university library, and got hooked. This is from the "Botanical" series and may be the best. I am interested

in crops and foods, and while there are a number of books on apples, this is really the best overall. It is nicely written and excellently illustrated. The variety of apples is amazing. Reiss notes that the apple genome has 57,000 genes, twice as many as we humans. One theme in this book is the manipulation of apple genes--long done in terms of grafting, it now includes gene manipulation. A gene from the cecropia moth has been inserted into some variety of apples, to resist fire blight, whatever that is. Me, I want nothing but apple genes in my apple, apparently a sentiment Reiss has also. Reiss sees apple marketing as a problem. Marketing focuses on a few widely recognized varieties, and she says this has resulted in the loss of taste and perhaps also the loss of nutrients. She is optimistic about the lively interest in heirloom apples, and sees that as potentially becoming important enough so that nutritious and tasty apples will return to the grocery. There are chapters on domestication of the fruit, of how varieties have developed and on how apples have been depicted in the arts. The book also has an intriguing list of varieties--it actually got me wanting to sample some. The book is entertaining and informative. If you like apples, read the book.

Gala and Honeycrisp. Pink Lady and Pacific Rose. King Luscious and Winesap. The names of apples are as juicy as the fruit itself. One of the most widely distributed fruits on the planet, apples have always meant something beyond food and drink. Their seeds have been planted deep within the myths, religion, and art of nearly every culture. They are symbols of beauty, desire, and sin; signs of hidden poisons and healthy eating; emblems of computers, phones, and music. Exploring the symbolism, art, and literature of the apple, as well as its botanical background, Marcia Reiss follows this iconic fruit from its origins to its now-ubiquitous presence in our world. Journeying back to the apples germination in the mountains of Central Asia, Reiss travels along the Silk Road to Europe and the New World. She reveals that, from Charlemagne to Johnny Appleseed to the colonization of South Africa, where settlers were required to plant apple orchards that led to the development of new towns, apples have become a global commodity. In addition to delving into the latest debates about chemical sprays, Reiss looks at the rise of heirloom orchards and the hopes and fears of genetic developments. She also tells the parallel tale of apple cider, its decline during the Temperance Movement and its return as an artisanal alternative to wine. Beautifully illustrated with historic and contemporary images and containing a directory of popular and heirloom varieties, *Apple* is a book ripe for devouring.

The latest in the excellent Botanical series examines the mythology and history of this sweet source of temptation.