

# THE GENTLEMEN'S ORCHARD

# FILOLI

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The gentlemen's orchard at Filoli covers 6.8 acres and contains heirloom fruit varieties of both familiar and uncommon fruits. The objective of renovating the orchard was not to produce the fruit that we now enjoy during fall festivals but to preserve the orchard itself as a critical part of this historic landscape. The Orchard is a character-defining feature of Filoli and its identity as an American turn-of-the-century country house.

A gentlemen's orchard, which was an integral part of any great estate of the period, was an eclectic connoisseur's collection of European and American varieties of fruits grown for the enjoyment of the family of the estate. Since this was not a commercial orchard, efficiency of management and shipability of fruit were secondary to having a diverse, delicious, and interesting fruit collection.

In 1997 when only 150 trees remained from the 1000 Bourn had originally planted in 1918, Filoli's Horticultural Director Lucy Tolmach proposed renewed attention to the Orchard. The goals were to stabilize and restore the existing 6.8 acre fruit orchard and to accept a new collection of 225 historic apples and pear trees as the foundation for replanting the Filoli Fruit Orchard. Interested volunteers, including C. Todd Kennedy, members of the Santa Clara Chapter of Rare Fruit Growers Inc., owners of heirloom fruit nurseries and commercial orchards helped to make this ambitious rehabilitation project possible.

Starting in 1999, trees were planted bringing the total today is 624 trees. The orchard includes the following fruit trees and vines:

- Pome fruits: apples, pears, asian pears, azorole, *Crateogomespilus*, hales, mayhaws, medlars and quince, rowan, shan cha, sorb, tejocote, and whitebeam
- Stone fruits: apricots, peaches, nectarine, and plums
- Other fruits: figs, pawpaws, persimmons, and nuts
- 138 table grapes

Restoration of the orchard as a diverse collection of fruit is important for maintaining our historic integrity, but it also is very significant because it represents the conservation of diverse genetic characteristics or germplasm. The importance of preserving fruit germplasm (the hereditary material, the genes which is in some cases is centuries old), is to maintain as much genetic diversity as possible. Genes for flavor and fragrance, pest and disease resistance, and vigor are all needed for long-term success and survival of the population and for use in future fruit breeding programs. If the genes are lost, many centuries of plant breeding and selection work is also lost. In the case of fruit germplasm, historic fruit cultivars are both living legacies and evidence of our past cultural history. Filoli's orchard contains some trees that may be the only ones in existence.

Original Apples in the Filoli Orchard include: 'Baldwin', 'Black Twig', 'Esopus Spitzenberg', 'Gravenstein', 'Jonathan', 'Newtown Pippin', 'Winter Banana', 'Wolf River', 'Yellow Bellflower'.

Original Pears in the Filoli Orchard include: 'Bartlett', 'Belle Lucrative', 'Doctoe Jules Guyot', 'Doyenne du Comice', 'Duchess d'Angouleme', 'Lincoln', 'Louise Bonne d'Avranches', 'President Mas', 'Souvenir du Congres', and 'Winter Nelis'. Original Asian Pears include: 'Chojuro', 'Keiffer', and 'Okusankichi'.

**Orchard tours are available Wednesdays and Saturdays August through October. For more visit our web site, [www.filoli.org](http://www.filoli.org).**

