# Selecting your cultivar

With more than 3,000 cultivars grown in the UK, where do you start? Here are some sure-fire winners, all with the RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) for plants that perform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Harvest / use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'James Grieve' (1890)</td>
<td>D/C</td>
<td>Crisp, juicy and tangy. Excellent flavour</td>
<td>Pick early Sept; use Sept–Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Scrumptious' (1980)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Bright red fruit. Aromatic, crisp, sweet flavour</td>
<td>Pick early Sept and eat fresh from tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Charles Ross' (1890)</td>
<td>D/C</td>
<td>Sweet-flavoured eater which bakes well</td>
<td>Pick early Sept; use Oct–Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Sunset' (1933)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Crisp, juicy, Cox-like flavour but easier to grow</td>
<td>Pick late Sept; use Oct–Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Lane’s Prince Albert' (1840)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Good flavour. Cooks to a sharp lemon-coloured puree</td>
<td>Pick early Oct; use Dec–Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Ashmead’s Kernel' (1700)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Juicy, refreshing, aromatic flavour</td>
<td>Pick mid-Oct; use Dec–Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Dumrellor’s Seedling' (1819)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Good flavour. Cooks to a sharp cream-coloured puree</td>
<td>Pick mid-Oct; use Nov–Mar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY**

- **D** Dessert apples are sweet and juicy. Some are eaten fresh from the tree. Others will keep for longer.
- **C** Cooking apples are sharp.
- **D/C** Dual purpose apples can be used as eaters or for cooking. Dates in brackets after names give the approximate year the cultivar was bred.

All the cultivars shown above are available from Wisley Plant Centre (rhs.org.uk/wisleyplantcentre).

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All images © RHS except ‘Charles Ross’ © National Fruit Collection, Brogdale.
Six easy steps to perfect apple trees
Growing fruit trees can seem complicated but follow these simple steps to successfully grow your own apples.

1. Choosing an apple to grow
That's one you like the taste of – not a supermarket apple, but something special

2. Buy two different apples
Apples need pollination from another cultivar (variety) to fruit well. Keep it simple – choose apples from our selection on the back page, which will all pollinate each other

3. Select a rootstock
Apples are grafted on specially selected rootstocks which determine how big they get. For small trees (up to 3m) in pots or the open ground, choose apples on rootstock M26

4. Buy bush trees
Apples can be grown as trees, bushes, cordons, fans, espaliers and step-overs. Keep it simple and grow a bush tree (a small tree on a short trunk)

5. Growing your trees
Plant your apples either in the ground in well-prepared soil (choose a sunny spot) or in containers with John Innes No. 3 potting compost

6. Pruning your trees
Apples need pruning for a good shape and plenty of fruit. Keep it simple and buy a two-year-old open-centred bush. This will already be partly trained

A First winter
Shorten the longest shoots by half to an outward-facing bud and remove any which are crossing or rubbing.

B Second winter onwards
Shorten very long shoots to an outward-facing bud and remove any which are crossing or rubbing.

Don’t stop there
Once you’ve succeeded with two, grow more. After all, in the UK alone, there are well over 3,000 cultivars to choose from

For more advice on growing and pruning apple trees, search on apples at rhs.org.uk