



LYNN MELLIS WORTHINGTON REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Apple trees were planted Saturday on the grounds of the Eric Sloane Museum in Kent as part of a program on heirloom apples.

# Expert shares apple lore

## Grower explains fruit's history in museum talk

BY LYNN MELLIS WORTHINGTON  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

KENT — There was a lot to learn about apples Saturday afternoon and Peter Montgomery of Warren was happy to share his knowledge.

The Eric Sloane Museum is focused on the theme of apples for this year's season. Montgomery owns Montgomery Gardens and is helping guide the Friends of the Eric Sloane Museum in the development of an orchard on the property.

Montgomery fielded questions from visitors and members of the friends group who attended the program. He began explaining there are two times to prune apple trees — in March for fruit production and in the summer months of July or August to control the height.

He even gave some history lessons during his talk, explaining that Jesse Hiatt of Peru, Iowa, in 1870 started the craze for Red Delicious apples but prior to that an apple was not synonymous with "red." Hiatt's apples were prized for their beautiful color and their flavor. "Grocers paid more for red apples," Montgomery explained. So the varieties became grown for how they looked, rather than how they tasted. He pointed out that the apples that will grow in the museum orchard will not look that pretty but will have wonderful flavors.

"These apples look ugly but they taste fantastic," he said. There were 10 apple trees planted on the hill sloping



LYNN MELLIS WORTHINGTON REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Peter Montgomery, owner of Montgomery Gardens based in Warren, cuts off a portion of an apple branch as Barbara and Joseph Germano, also of Warren, watch during Saturday's presentation on heirloom apple trees. Montgomery talked about grafting.



LYNN MELLIS WORTHINGTON REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Bowen Bernardin and his mother, Julie Chang, of Kent, help plant apple trees Saturday at a program on heirloom apples at the Eric Sloane Museum in Kent.



LYNN MELLIS WORTHINGTON REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

The blossoms of a Cox Orange Pippin apple tree at the Eric Sloane Museum in Kent.

down away from the Noah Blake Cabin on the museum grounds.

Eric Sloane made a reference to the heirloom variety Westfield Seek No Further apple tree growing in the abandoned, haunted village

of Dudleytown in Cornwall Bridge in his book, "A Reverence for Wood." So there were two of those variety that were found in Maine and shipped to Kent to be a part of the new orchard. The other heirloom varieties were from

Maryland.

Apples are native to Kazakhstan and were brought to Europe and America by travelers, Montgomery said. When settlers came to the New World they brought apple seeds with them and scattered them in fields hoping they would start growing. Apples are now never grown from seed, Montgomery explained. Instead they are grafted onto root stock.

The Eric Sloane Museum will hold a series of events this year from May to October based on the apple theme. Montgomery will return June 18 to give a talk from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the history, development, and current restoration efforts concerning Connecticut's heirloom fruit trees.

Contact Lynn Mellis Worthington at [lynnmellw@gmail.com](mailto:lynnmellw@gmail.com) or on Twitter @lynnmellw.