

PRESS RELEASE

Museum of Cider's orchards receive national recognition

Hereford's Museum of Cider, the largest such museum anywhere in the world, has in recent years taken ownership of a several orchards in Breinton, just west of Hereford city. Amongst these orchards is a large collection of heritage cider apple trees built up over the last 20 years. Now, the collection has been awarded National Plant Collection® status for *Malus Cider* apple trees by UK conservation organisation Plant Heritage, endorsing its importance in preserving heritage cider apple varieties and as a diverse resource to help ensure that cider fruit can withstand future threats, including from climate change.



The collection was the brainchild of the late Gillian Bulmer who realised the need for a gene bank for many of the varieties that were once valued but are now largely ignored because they do not fit with current consumer tastes or the limitations of modern

orcharding practice. Varieties have been collected and grafted from trees across Herefordshire, the West Midlands and South-West. The work to find, propagate, research and document the collection is undertaken by the Museum of Cider's volunteer 'Conservator of Fruit' John Teiser, with long-time colleagues Rob Uren and Gillian's nephew Tim Bulmer maintaining the orchards. All varieties are being genetically tested to help confirm their identity and provenance.

Dr Tim Upson, Chair of the Plants Collections Committee, Plant Heritage and Director of Gardens and Horticulture at the RHS says

"The diversity of apples in the UK is unsurpassed with wonderful regional varieties strongly linked to local culture and history. Conserving this unique plant diversity through well-managed and curated collections is vital to ensure this heritage is available to benefit future generations. This collection of cider apple trees, now a fully approved Plant Heritage National Plant Collection®, makes a key and important contribution to conserving the UK's cultivated plants and apples in particular."

Dr Matt Ordidge, scientific curator of the UK's National Fruit Collection adds

“The collection at the Museum of Cider now registered with Plant Heritage is a valuable resource, protecting diversity for the future. It contains material that is currently not backed up in the National Fruit Collection and has been carefully curated over recent years by John Teiser.”

Such Plant National Collections are recognised internationally as contributing to plant conservation and biodiversity.

Dr David Marshall, Chairman of the Trustees of the Museum of Cider says “Receiving National Plant Collection® status is thanks to many years of care by John Teiser and the Museum of Cider’s orchard team, led by trustee Chris Fairs, and the vision of Gillian Bulmer. It’s a major achievement for Herefordshire and reflects its important cider heritage.”

John Teiser and colleagues continue to extend the collection, searching out overlooked old cider apple trees in orchards and gardens in the Herefordshire area.