

Sand Creek Organics

Dieter Bay and Elisabeth Guentert Bay, Grand Forks BC, www.dimutara/sand-creek-organics/

Certified Organic by NOOA Nr. 04-228

Apples

2012 we started our orchard with the vision to grow **high quality** apples with the **best tasting varieties we could get from Europe**. We grafted and planted every tree ourselves, and we are looking after them with great care. Our orchard is nestled below cliffs on a southern exposed hill side at about 660m above sea level. Our soil is a sandy loam with rocky areas and bed rock outcrops. Therefore drip irrigation is absolutely necessary. We terraced the whole orchard in order to keep it from eroding and also for water retention. A natural pond is under construction. After completion it will further enhance the micro climate in the orchard, increasing the moisture content besides creating a natural habitat for a larger variety of insects, birds, frogs etc. We are striving for a large diversity of plants and have introduced more than 100 different tree, shrub and perennial varieties besides our vegetable garden and all our fruit trees. The 200 fruit trees are loosely planted in rows and groups and bushes. As long as the trees are small, the rows are under cultivation which



There will be rows of garlic, large strawberry beds, potatoes, salad greens, beans and more planted in between the fruit trees. It requires high maintenance to a certain extent but there are hardly any diseases or pests in our orchard. A couple of wild grouse have decided to raise their chicks in the orchard which solves a lot of pest problems but is also an ongoing concern for our berry crops which they like to indulge in. We have not erased the vegetation growing previously here which, after a grazing cattle period and afterwards abandoned for many years, consists mainly of Hoary Alyssum, Flax Toadweed, Salsify, Saint John's Wort, Cinqfoil, Knapweed, various native grasses and a lot of other different herbs and flowers besides Oregon grape, wild roses and snowberries. With the "native" vegetation we kept the native pollinating insects, and adding our domestic flowers and herbs to the mix increased their amount dramatically. We have a large variety of native bees and bumblebees, pollinating wasps and flies and a host of other beneficial insects in our orchard and therefore did not yet introduce any domestic bees because we are not quite sure yet how it will change the balance in the natural system. We got a hive but not a swarm yet. Organic fertilizers, composts and herbal teas and heavy mulching have dramatically increased the fertility of the soil and added a lot of organic matter to the orchard. The capability of holding the water is getting better every year.

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Our 22 varieties of Apples

Early Apples, ready in September:	Yellow Transparent, Gravenstein, Summer Red, MacIntosh
Best to eat in October – December:	Elstar, Gelber Edelapfel, Alkmene, Cox Korallo, Cox Orange Pippin
For storage till spring:	Topaz, Jonagold, Goldparmäne, RubINETTE, Brettacher, Gloster, Golden Delicious, Boskoop, Glockenapfel, Winterbanana, Wintercalville, Berlepsch, Wellant

We love to eat all our apples. Nevertheless our most favorable apples are definitely Alkmene, Berlepsch, Topaz, RubINETTE and Boskoop.

Early in the year we enjoy the fresh and juicy Gravenstein and in April, May, June in the following year we are still eating Gloster and Glockenapfel which are extremely good keepers.