

## ORCHARD HILL FARM CLAIMS TOP HONORS AT THE 2022 ILLINOIS SWEET CIDER CONTESTS

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — The Illinois State Horticulture Society sponsored its 32nd Illinois and National Sweet Cider Contests and the 19th National Hard Cider Contest, held in conjunction with the Illinois Specialty Growers Association Specialty Crop Conference on January 6 in Springfield.

Wes Carithers of Orchard Hill Farm in Lewiston produced the No. 1 overall rated cider at this year's contest, winning both the National and Illinois contests. Wes used Fuji, Jonagold, Jonathan and Honeycrisp apples to make his winning cider.

Second Place National Cider and Second Place Illinois Cider went to Patrick Riofredo and Victor Rios of Curran's Orchard in Rockford. Third Place National Cider and Third Place Illinois Cider went to Justin Wiles and Trevor Grissom of Wiles Family Orchard in Fairfield.

Midwest Cider of Merit 1st Runner-up was awarded to Mike and Jenna Spychal of Jonamac Orchard in Malta. Midwest Cider of Merit 2nd Runner-up went to Greg Durdan of Big Bear Orchard in Grand Ridge, and the Midwest Cider of Merit 3rd Runner-up went to Brian Edwards of Edwards Apple Orchard West in Winnebago.

This year, Wiles Family Orchard of Fairfield claimed the Champion Hard Cider. Justin Wiles and Trevor Grissom produced their winning hard cider for this year's contest with a combination of Gold Rush, Golden Delicious, Jonathon and Gala apples.

Judges evaluated the cider entries using a 25- point rating scale for cider quality characteristics. The judges conducted "blind" evaluations where only a randomly chosen sample number identified each cider entry. The Illinois State Horticultural Society (ISHS) has conducted the sweet cider contest since 1990.

The sweet cider contest presents awards in three categories: National, Illinois and Midwest Cider of Merit. National awards are open to all U.S. producers, and Illinois awards are open to Illinois producers that are members of the ISHS. The Midwest Cider of Merit awards are open to Illinois producers, plus producers from other adjoining states that do not place in the National

or Illinois categories.

Hard cider entries were each individually awarded points based on characteristics like clarity, color, bouquet, balance of alcohol, acidity, sweetness, sugar/acid balance, body, flavor, astringency and bitterness, any off-flavors, and the overall quality.

The ISHS gratefully acknowledges the dedication and hard work of our judging team. Plus, a special thanks to Sangamon County Master Gardeners Steve and Sharon Petrelli, and Don Wisniewski. Thank you!

Most importantly, thanks are extended to all who entered the contest this year. Start planning now for the next contest in 2023.

A summary of more contest notes is outlined below.

<b>National Awards</b>	Firm	Address	Cultivar Blend
First Place	Orchard Hill Farm	Lewiston, IL	Fuji, Jonagold, Jonathan, Honeycrisp
Second Place	Curran's Orchard	Rockford, IL	Jonathan, Cortland, Honeycrisp, Empire, Yellow Delicious
Third Place	Wiles Family Orchard	Fairfield, IL	Gold Rush, Golden Delicious, Jonathon, Empire
<b>Illinois Awards</b>			
First Place	Orchard Hill Farm	Lewiston, IL	see above
Second Place	Curran's Orchard	Rockford, IL	see above
Third Place	Wiles Family Orchard	Fairfield, IL	see above
<b>Midwest Cider of Merit</b>			
First Runner-up	Jonamac Orchard	Malta, IL	Evercrisp, Honeycrisp, Gold Rush, Pink Lady, Fuji
Second Runner-up	Big Bear Orchard	Grand Ridge, IL	Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Jonathan, Gold Rush
Third Runner-up	Edwards Apple Orchard West	Winnebago, IL	Gala, Pixie Crunch, Honeycrisp, Cameo, Red Delicious, Blondee, Jonamac
<b>Hard Cider</b>			
Champion	Wiles Family Orchard	Fairfield, IL	Gold Rush, Golden Delicious, Jonathan

