The Apple of My Eye: Apple Taste-Testing

**Unit:** The Apple Genomics Project

**Lesson:** The Apple of My Eye: Apple Taste-Testing

**Audience:** This lesson is intended for use with upper elementary, middle, and high school science, agriculture, or family and consumer science classes. It could also be used with informal audiences from upper elementary school age and up, studying science, apples, or the sense of taste.

**General Objective:** To teach youth to recognize differences between apple varieties.

**Specific Objectives:**

1. To construct a table of comparisons of characteristics and uses of common apple varieties.
2. To identify differences and similarities between varieties of apples, including taste and appearance.

**Time Required:** About an hour

**Instructor Directions:**

Prior to having students complete this activity, collect a number of different varieties of apples from a local grocery store, farmer’s market, or orchard. For each variety, slice an apple or two into pieces, and place them on a paper plate along with an entire apple. Use a marker to label each paper plate with the variety name. Place the paper plates on a table or counter where students will have easy access to them. Also, run enough copies of the “Doing an Apple Taste Test” worksheet for the class.

**Resources:**

- For a list of national academic standards met by this activity, see the “Apple of My Eye” lesson on the apple genomics website where you downloaded this activity. The “Apple of My Eye” lesson also has additional activities and information about apples.
**Doing an Apple Taste Test**

Apple taste testing is one way to really consider subtle differences between apple varieties. For this exercise, your instructor has chosen some apple varieties that you will taste and evaluate. (At least three varieties are needed for comparison.)

Your instructor has prepared samples of each variety for you. Each apple variety is presented separately, with a whole apple and cut-up slices of another apple of the same variety together on the same plate (one variety per plate). Examine each variety in turn. You will record your observations in the table on the next page, and answer the following questions for each variety:

1. Take a few minutes and look at a whole apple of each variety. Note the size, shape, color, and characteristics of the stem.

2. Look at the pieces of cut apple. Note the flesh color. Is it white, or creamy, or yellow?

3. Is the peel thin or thick? Smooth or leathery?

4. Smell a piece of each apple variety. Does it have a characteristic aroma?

5. Taste a slice of each apple variety. Is it sweet, or tart, or sour?


7. How about the texture of the peel? Is it tender or tough?

8. Which variety has the most flavor? Which has the strongest aroma?

9. Note the color of the slices after exposure to air. Does the flesh of some varieties stay white longer than others? Why might slices of some varieties turn brown sooner than others? (If you have time, you could try dipping slices of different varieties in lemon juice, or water with a little salt, to see how this affects the browning rate of each variety. Why might this change the rate of browning?)

10. Which varieties do you think would be best for salads and fruit cups?

11. Which varieties would combine best to flavor pies and sauces?

12. Which variety would you prefer to eat fresh?

13. Record your observations in the table on the next page.
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<th>Size</th>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Flesh</th>
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