

Boulder Fruit and Nut Preservation Regis-Tree

To Preserve the Heritage Perennial Food Plants of Boulder, Colorado

About the 'Regis-Tree'

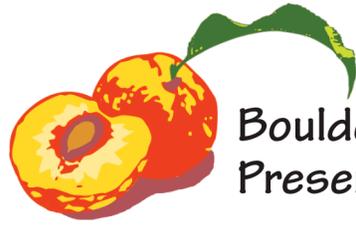
What: The Boulder Fruit and Nut Preservation Regis-Tree is a collaborative community-wide effort that seeks to identify, document, research, and preserve the heritage perennial food plants of Boulder, Colorado.

Who: Permaculture designer Jason Gerhardt and his students at Naropa University are initiating the Regis-Tree as a long-term community research project, for the benefit of the Boulder community and its heritage perennial food plants.

Why: Boulder, Colorado once was a significant fruit-growing area where large orchards were planted. Many of these heritage fruit, nut, and other perennial edible plants still survive today at the margins of modern Boulder. Some of these trees and plants are being lost to old age, re-development, neglect, etc.

Why not just buy new fruit trees and plant them? This seems like a logical solution to revive fruit growing, however a fruit culture revival is more a by-product of the Regis-Tree than the aim; the significance of regional provenance is what we are truly after. There is nothing wrong with planting new fruit varieties, however much of the work in determining successful varieties for the region has already been accomplished by our perennial food-cultivating predecessors. Many fruit varieties were originally brought to the region during westward expansion, some of which succeeded, some of which did not. Other plants still were likely traveling with nomadic indigenous peoples and in unique cases were brought to this region much earlier than European settlement. What we are left with is the survivors of these original plantings, and in some cases their hybrids. While there has been little true genetic adaptation occurring in the majority of Boulder's heritage perennial food plants, simple proof of climatic success is significance enough to determine successful crops and varieties for the region. And that climatic success is what we seek to preserve!

Please send questions and comments to boulder.registree@gmail.com



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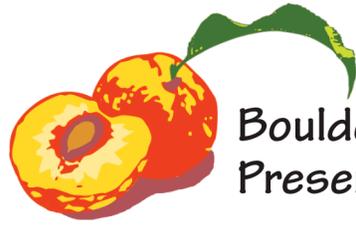
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How: This is a community-wide project. Without the help and participation of the Boulder community in identifying heritage perennial food plants, the scope of the project will be much more limited. We seek to collect 'nomination forms' for specific trees and plants with as much detail about the specimen as possible. We then will determine the significance of this tree or plant to the Regis-Tree project and if approved, will document the specimen as an official part of the Regis-Tree. From there we will attempt to identify the variety of the tree or plant, and will attempt, with permission of landowner, to collect vegetative propagation materials to preserve the variety. The purpose of the significant work in approving nominations is to ensure we don't end up with 10 Red Delicious apples in the Regis-Tree for example (Red Delicious, circa 1880, is a common heritage apple variety that was planted in Boulder).

Inaugural Year-2012: The Regis-Tree is beginning in a year that is likely to prove one of the best fruit bearing years in the region for decades. Due to a combination of unseasonably warm temperatures and low incidence of spring frost, nearly every fruiting plant is bearing this year. Therefore, this is the year to get out there, and taste those apples, plums, pears, peaches, etc. to determine if those varieties are worth preserving, that is to say, if they are tasty enough to warrant continued stewardship. There is much more to perennial edible plants than taste as well, and those characteristics will be factored in to the nomination process. For example disease or pest resistance can be a valuable enough trait to make a variety worth preserving in and of itself.

Methods: Community involvement is paramount to the success of preserving the heritage perennial food plants of Boulder, Colorado. The 'nomination form' is posted on the web and available for submissions. We will process the submission, document the tree, and seek to preserve it by vegetative reproduction via grafting and/or select seed collection. The "Regis-Tree" of nominated and approved trees and plants will be available as a public document once the forms are sorted. If you wish your nomination to not be made public please indicate so.

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Collection: The collection of preserved trees/plants will be held at Multiple Functions Nursery at Naropa University as well as other select locations to keep living stock of these heritage perennial food plants, and to grow them out so they can be widely planted again. The eventual goal is that the 'collection' will be held in and around the landscapes of Boulder, preserved through use.

Definitions:

-“Heritage” here means any plant that has been growing for 50 or more years. This is a rough rule of thumb simply made to discourage the nomination of relatively new plantings. We seek to preserve the varieties that have had multiple decades to prove themselves successful in our climate. Older trees will be prioritized due to a higher chance of loss.

-“Preservation” here means to document and rescue a plant variety that is at risk of being lost. This kind of preservation is not intended to hold and restrict, but to REGENERATE the variety through widespread USE of the plant products.

-“Boulder” here means anywhere within the county limits of Boulder County, Colorado.

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