

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council

Community Orchard

The orchard on Mill Road was planted with “half standards” by volunteers in 2012 to create an attractive resource for the village. The land itself was on the boundary of the World War II airfield and the perimeter fence, with warning signs “THIS IS A PROHIBITED PLACE WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT. UNAUTHORISED PERSONS ENTERING THE SITE MAY BE ARRESTED AND PROSECUTED”, ran down the middle of the plot. Old fence stumps and other debris had to be removed by the Oakington Community Orchard Project (OCOP) Team to allow safe access to the site. In the early days the site was maintained by Nick Harrison, who planted the beautiful display of snowdrops along the fence. The land is adjacent to a Sycamore wood planted in 1989 and now owned by Homes England. The Parish Council has leased the land since 2019.



The trees are all local heritage varieties, sourced from the East of England Apples and Orchards Project, so you may find the flavours different from your usual supermarket varieties. The EEAOP is a membership organisation, established in 2003 and based near Fakenham, Norfolk. They promote the planting of local orchard fruit varieties and the preservation of orchards in the east of England. The region’s heritage includes around 270 varieties of apple, pear, plum and cherry and their orchard habitat. Since the 1960s we’ve lost over 60% of the orchard habitat across our region, so it’s important that what remains is valued and preserved. We have 2 plum, 2 pear, 2 gage, 2 cherry (Summer Sun) and 8 apple trees on this site.

<https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk>

01328 838403

The trees carry labels which indicate the variety, its use, its flowering time and the time when the fruit should be ripe and ready for picking. As this is an asset shared by the whole community, we would ask you only to pick fruit for your own personal use. These heritage varieties do not ripen well at home and should be left on the tree until ripe, for the flavours to fully develop. To check if an apple is ripe enough to eat, give it a half turn. If it does not come off the tree, leave it a week or two more.



We are always looking for volunteers to help out, if you are interested contact us via oakcomorchards@gmail.com or the Parish Council

Fruit Tree Fact Sheet – Mill Road – Trees listed in order from the Gate

1. Culinary Plum – Early Rivers <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/early-rivers/> Raised at the Rivers' Nursery in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire around 1820 from the older French variety "Precoce de Tours". It received a NHS award in 1895.
2. Cherry – Summer Sun <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/summer-sun-2/> is a Norfolk Variety first recorded around 1900
3. Dessert Plum - Wallis' Wonder <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/walliss-wonder/> a fairly recent variety developed in 1960 by Simpsons' Nursery, Fordham, Cambridgeshire exclusively for Mr Wallis's orchard in Bluntisham, Huntingdonshire.
4. Dessert Apple - Chivers Delight <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/chivers-delight/> you cannot get more local than this variety which was developed by Stephen Chivers of Histon in 1920.
5. Dessert Pear - Hacon's Incomparable <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/hacons-incomparable/> a Norfolk variety whose origin is uncertain, but was sold by a Mr. J Hacon around 1814.
6. Dessert Gage – Willingham <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/willingham-gage/> thought to have arisen from a Green Gage in Willingham in the early 1800's it was selected in the late 1900's by the RHS for its good cropping and excellent fruit quality.
7. Dessert Pear - Conference <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/conference/> this well-known pear was developed by the Rivers' Nursery in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire in 1885 and named after the Apple & Pear Conference held in London that year.
8. Dessert Apple - Histon Favourite <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/histon-favourite/> another very local variety developed by John Chivers of Histon in 1850.
9. Culinary Apple - Jolly Miller <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/jolly-miller/> First recorded in 1883 in the Cottenham area where it was very popular and probably named after the public house in the village.
10. Cherry – Summer Sun <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/summer-sun-2/>
11. Dessert Gage - Cambridge <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/cambridge-gage/> First recorded in Histon in 1927 and, although it probably came from a Green Gage, it is larger and better cropping.
12. Dessert Apple - New Rock Pippin <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/new-rock-pippin/> The apple was raised by William Pleasance in Barnwell on the edge of the city of Cambridge in 1821, prized for its excellent keeping qualities.
13. Dessert Apple – Ingall's Pippin <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/ingalls-pippin/> A Lincolnshire apple raised around 1915 by William Ingall of Grimoldby, near Louth and fully introduced in 1928.
14. Culinary Apple - Desse De Buff <http://www.nationalfruitcollection.org.uk/full2.php?id=1551> Exhibited in 1900 by Laxton's of Bedford, the variety was developed at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire and originally called "Dessin de Boeuf".
15. Dessert Apple - Laxton's Superb <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/laxtons-superb/> Raised by Laxton's of Bedford in 1897 and introduced in 1922 it was a cross between Wyken Pippin and Cox's Orange Pippin.
16. Culinary Apple - Murfitt's Seedling <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/product/murfitts-seedling/> First recorded in 1883 and popular in the Cottenham and Histon orchards. It holds its shape well and needs virtually no sugar when cooked.

Wildflowers recorded in the orchard in 2022

Birdseye Speedwell
Bladder Campion
Bryony
Celandine
Common Mallow
Forget-me-not
Garlic Mustard
Goose grass
Green Alkanet
Ground Ivy
Hedge Mustard
Pink Campion
Red Dead Nettle
Stinging Nettle
White Campion
White Dead Nettle

