



Brendon Orchards Co-operative Autumn 2015

WE ARE AN ACTIVE GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT FRUIT!

Established in 2007 to benefit the local community by helping them to use fruit which would otherwise go to waste, Brendon Orchards is a fantastic orchard and juicing cooperative based in Wiveliscombe, Somerset.

A community venture, it brings together diverse elements - young and older, farmers and foragers. Pressing apples provides fantastic, healthy drinks, while encouraging an awareness of the value of local produce and sense of just how special the orchards of Somerset are. Children see just how food is produced - it doesn't all just magically arrive in the supermarket. Apple Days are an opportunity to not only make juice to keep from your own fruit, but also identify your apples, bob for apples, share an apple-based meal or just have a cuppa and meet new people.

Our simple mission is to

- Provide ways for the community to make its own produce from locally grown fruit, thereby preventing wastage and supporting the community by linking people and groups with surplus fruit
- Provide training on juicing, orchard management and fruit usage, and to maximize production from such fruit
- Increase the economic sustainability of the local area and reduce food miles by creating high quality local products which will be available locally.
- Gather knowledge of where local orchards and individual trees are, their history and varieties.
- Hold events such as apple days, wassailing and blossom picnics.

The Naturesave grant has allowed the coop to purchase a pump to speed up our bottling operations and a new press that will allow us to cover the growing demand for press hires in the busy season.

This has meant that last season we could increase our hires out of the pressing and bottling kits to 86 and accommodate 38 families and individuals over 11 Community Press sessions.

It also allowed us to work with schools, enabling up to 100 pupils to not only learn about the simple, natural process and about local food production and minimizing waste but also take home a large bottle of juice.

All in all about 10,000 litres of juice were produced in the community last season.

Juice that is produced by volunteers for the coop with donated apples -- picked, pressed, bottled and pasteurized – is sold at the local Farmers Market and festivals to financially support our operations and allow us to inspire more people to maximize great local resources – apples, our equipment and amazing volunteer support. These bottles are also donated to the local food bank and to refugee support initiatives.

We also make a couple of barrels of cider to fuel our annual wassail which this year attracted about a hundred people to sing round the fire for a good harvest, laugh at the funny Green Man, drink hot mulled cider and dance to some great local folk musicians. Donations went to support Syrian refugees.