The Apple Detective

Many years ago, there were over 17,000 named varieties of apples in North America. Today, there are only about 4,500 types. By the 1900s, farmers had stopped growing most varieties of apples because people didn't buy them.

This decrease in the types of apples also decreased their genetic diversity. With less diversity, apples became harder to grow and farmers needed to rely on pesticides to save their crops. Less diversity also meant less nutrition.

How can we solve this apple problem? David Benscoter has an idea. He is the founder of the Lost Apple Project, an organization that locates old varieties of apples and rescues them from extinction. Since 2014, the Lost Apple Project has found 29 varieties of apples that were thought to be gone forever. Now David will bring them back.

David was a detective with the FBI for 24 years. He knows how to solve problems. He discovered an interest in apples when helping care for a neighbor's trees. Once he retired from the FBI, he became an apple detective.

The Lost Apple Project searches abandoned farms and orchards as well as seed catalogues and county fair records to find old apple varieties. The ones that David has rescued have names like the Streaked Pippin, the Sary

Sinap, the Ivanhoe, and the Nero. They come in all shades of red, yellow, and green.

David find his new work fulfilling. He says, "an apple tree you've never tasted before, a taste somebody hasn't tasted in a hundred years, it's rewarding knowing that we brought these varieties back." He describes the lost apples as having a different sort of taste than the modern varieties. But they are still juicy and delicious.

The USDA has partnered with David to bring his rediscovered apples to the public. They USDA says "we get excited … because it's a push for apple conservationism." The hope is that growing the lost varieties will increase the genetic diversity of apples so that they can become more nutritious and reliable again.

Reading Is Fundamental

until **every child** reads

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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. How many apple varieties used to grow in North America?

    a. 4500

    b. 1900

    c. 29

    d. 17000

2. Which of the following was NOT listed as a name of David's rescued apples?

    a. Streaked Pippin

    b. Ivanhoe

    c. Iowa Flat

    d. Nero

3. Why is it important to discover lost apples?

    a. To increase genetic diversity

    b. Because they are juicy and delicious

    c. To preserve the different colors

    d. Because they are a part of history

4. How do you think David's work at the FBI helps him with his work at the Lost Apple Project?

    a. He learned how to catch criminals

    b. He learned how solve problems and find answers

    c. He learned how to appreciate apples

    d. He learned how to find abandoned farms

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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