Drinking Cider in Paradise: Science, Improvement, and the Politics of Fruit Trees

VITTORIA DI PALMA

In 1729, among the pages of Batty Langley's lavish *Pomona: Or the Fruit-Garden Illustrated. Containing Sure Methods for Improving all the Best Kinds of Fruits Now Extant in England*, was published the transcript of a letter entitled 'A Curious Account of the most Valuable Cyder-Fruits of Devonshire'. This letter, written to Langley in 1727 by Hugh Stafford of Pynes, recounts the story of an apple tree. The tree was a wilding – that is, it grew from seed rather than being the product of grafting – and was to be found near Exeter, in the Parish of St Thomas. The tree came to notice because every other year it produced a large crop of apples, and in one of these years the Rector of the adjoining parish of Whiston, the Reverend Mr Robert Woolcombe, took a graft of this tree to grow in his nursery. One day in March, a number of years later, 'a Person came there to him on some Business, and finding something roll under his Foot, took it up, and it proved an Apple of this precious Fruit.' Mr Woolcombe, noting that it was 'perfectly sound, after it had lain in the long Grass [...] of the Nursery, thro' all the Rain, Frost, and Snow of the foregoing Winter, thought it must be a Fruit of more than common Value'. Tasting it, he found that the juice of this apple 'seem'd to promise both the Body, Roughness, and Flavour that wise Cyder-Drinkers in Devon now begin to desire', and thus decided to cultivate this apple for himself. After the requisite number of years had passed, the grafts had produced enough fruit to make cider, and the resulting drink surpassed all expectations. Mr Woolcombe was so pleased with his discovery that he 'talked of it in all Conversations' and although his enthusiasm 'created Amusement at first, [...] when Time produced an Hoghead of it, from Raillery it came to Seriousness, and every one from Laughter fell to

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Admiration. Accordingly, Woolcombe decided to give a name to honor the source of ‘his British Wine’, and since the original tree was wild, not grafted, he retained the name of Wilding; and, as he thought it superior to all others, so he gave a Title of Sovereignty to it; and hence the triumphant Royal Wilding. The fruit formerly known as the Red-Hill Crab (the name deriving from the location of the original tree) became, through this act of baptism, an apple of note, a dignified crop. Illustrated in Langley’s Pomea, the Royal Wilding became the pride of Devon, producing cider of such fine quality that it was held to be the finest cider fruit in all England. Crucial to this change in ascribed value was the act of naming. Stafford inveighed against those who might dare continue to call this apple by its former appellation, arguing that ‘this name is injurious, because Crab (as yet) is used among us in a Sense of Diminution, at least, if not of Reproach’. Crabs were not only uncultivated, but thoroughly unappreciated, ‘formerly suffer’d to fall and be eaten by the Hogs, when they would eat them, (which was not always because of their Harshness) or else to rot upon the Ground’. The same fruit by a different name was not the same fruit at all.

A few years later, however, a contender arose to challenge the supremacy of the Royal Wilding. Stafford, experimenting in his orchard with growing apples from seed, found that, by 1724, some trees had borne enough fruit to make a quantity of cider. This cider, when distilled, ‘ravish’d the Palm from the Royal Wilding. It had every one of the Qualities of that Cyder, and some of them to greater and manifest Degrees of Excellency; the Flavour of it in particular was finer and more delicate. And, following the now established tradition, it was deemed necessary to name this hitherto unknown fruit:

A Gentleman consulted on the important Occasion (was well acquainted with Mr. Woolcombe before-mention’d) had many Times, to promote Conversations, railed him on the Subject of his new Discovery of the Royal Wilding, (of which, however, he was a great Admire) and was now resolv’d to exceed him in the Name of this very Apple, and to leave no Room for him to go higher, should he find out any other Apple, or should he be minded to alter and raise the Appellation of the Royal Wilding.

Thus, when asked to devise a suitable name, he

first thought of Imperial Wilding; but finding Room yet left for Mr. Woolcombe, he proceeded to think of Celestial Wilding; and because he thought there might be yet an Ope left for Mr. Woolcombe to exceed that, he at last settled on Super-celestial, […] and there rested secure.

Stafford, in the spirit of friendly rivalry, was naturally highly pleased with this

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2 Ibid., pp. 139, 140.
3 Ibid., p. 147.
4 Ibid.
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mark of general approbation, and made sure that his own apple was likewise illustrated in Langley's tome. And although 'Super-celestial Wilding' was by no means a modest name, Stafford did not feel that it was unmerited, asserting to Langley

Nor are you to be surpriz'd if you think this Title set it above the celebrated Nectar which was in those upper Regions formerly drank by the Gods themselves: for besides that, if the Truth was known, I am satisfied none of them ever drank a Drop of such Liquor in their lives,

making sure to add, however, that these were, of course, 'Heathen Gods, and therefore we did not make the least Scruple to affront them'.

By the time this 'Curious Account' was published in Langley's Pomona, cider was more the stuff of amusing anecdotes than passionate pronouncements. However, the themes embedded in this letter — the adoption of a foundling, the act of naming as legitimation, and the link between cider and paradise — move the tenor of Stafford's narrative from report to fable, and reflect deep roots in an earlier period when cider had indeed been the focus of serious discourse and debate.

In the hopes of promoting a source of wine that would free England from a dependency on imports of canary, sack, and other foreign products, from the 1650s through the 1670s numerous tracts were published encouraging the widespread planting of orchards and the making of cider, perry, and other fruit wines. The beginnings of these efforts are inextricably associated with the figure of Samuel Hartlib — the Protestant educationalist, agriculturalist, and religious reformer. The center of a wide circle of correspondents, Hartlib acted as a facilitator and publicizer, sharing and printing the activities and investigations of a number of individuals who might otherwise have continued to work in isolation. In addition to circulating manuscripts among his many correspondents, he also rushed these missives into print, helping to generate an even wider dissemination of inventions and ideas. And in 1650, after more than ten years of publishing on spiritual, political, and educational matters, Hartlib turned his attention to agriculture. Of the numerous tracts relating to cultivation and the exploitation of natural resources published in the twelve years before his death, most famous was Samuel Hartlib his Legacie. The Legacie, like most of Hartlib's publications, was a compendium of letters

5 Ibid.
6 Directions for making perry, cherry wine or damson wine were often subsumed in discussions of cider, the processes being understood as analogous, if not identical. Certainly many more pages were devoted to cider than to any other fruit-tree wine, and my chapter will follow this convention. The contemporaneous, if less successful movement to encourage vineyards and winemaking by such works as John Rose's The English Vynard Vindicated could also be the subject of a very interesting discussion, but this lies beyond the scope of mine.
7 Samuel Hartlib, Samuel Hartlib his Legacie: or An Enlargement of the Discourse of Husbandry used in Brabant and Flanders: wherein are bequeathed to the Common-Wealth of England more
written by various authors, the longest and most influential of these being "A Large letter concerning the Defects and Remedies of English Husbandry written to Samuel Hartlib" by Sir Richard Child. More an outline of subjects needing investigation than a series of directions or rules, Child's letter mapped the state of English agriculture and demonstrated how it could be improved by identifying twenty-two 'deficiencies'; number five addressed the lack of orchard and fruit tree cultivation; number six the making of cider and perry.

With the publication of Child's letter, fruit tree cultivation and the production of fruit wines became central to the advancement of English husbandry. In the 1650s, Child's letter acted as a spur to other publications by members of Hartlib's circle; in the 1660s it was used as a blueprint for early scientific efforts to describe, understand, and exploit the English landscape by Fellows of the Royal Society. And although orchards and cider had only formed a small part of Child's enterprise, they soon became the subjects of a plethora of specialized publications, recognizable components of the seventeenth-century discourse of improvement.

The books on fruit trees and cider of the 1650s all proclaim their links with Hartlib. Hartlib himself published an anonymous letter as A Designe for Plentie, By an Universall Planting of Fruit-Trees in 1652, and he encouraged Ralph Austen to put his knowledge and experience of orchards into print. A Dialogue, or Familiar Discourse, and conference betweene the Husbandman, and Fruit-trees appeared in 1651; A Treatise of Fruit-Trees, Shewing The manner of Crafting, Planting, Pruning, and Ordering of them, was published with The


The following list, arranged in chronological order, does not include all seventeenth-century texts that discuss orchards, but favors those that also treat cider: William Lawson, A New Orchard and Garden (London, 1618); John Parkinson, Paradisus in Sole Paradisus Terrestris (London, 1629); Samuel Hartlib, A Designe for Plentie, By an Universall Planting of Fruit-Trees: Tenanted by some Wel-wishers to the Publick (London, n.d. [1652]); Ralph Austen, A Dialogue, or Familiar Discourse, and conference betweene the Husbandman, and Fruit-trees (Oxford, 1651) and A Treatise of Fruit-Trees, Shewing The manner of Crafting, Planting, Pruning, and Ordering of them in all respects, according to new and easy Rules of Experience (Oxford, 1653); John Beale, Herefordshire Orndards [written 1656] (Dublin, 1724); Ralph Austen, Observations on some part of Sr. Francis Bacon's natural history as it concerns, fruit-trees, fruits, and flowers; especially the fifth, sixth, and sevemth centuries (Oxford, 1658); John Evelyn et al., Pomona, or an Appendix Concerning Fruit-Trees. In relation to Cider (London, 1664), continaed in Evelyn's Sylva, Or a Discovere of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominions (London, 1664); John Worlidge, Vinetum Britannicum: Or A Treatise of Cider, And such other Wines and Drinks that are extracted from all manner of Fruits Growing in this Kingdom. Together with the Method of Propagating all sorts of Vinious Fruit-Trees. And a Description of the new-invented Ingenio or Mill, For the more expeditious and better making of Cider, And also the Right Method of making Medeglin and Birch-Whie (London, 1676); Moses Cooke, The Manner of Raising, Ordering and Improving Forest and Fruit Trees (London, 1676); John Beale and Anthony Lawrence, Nurseries, Orchards, Profitable Gardens and Vineyards Encouraged (London, 1677).
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Spirituall Use of an Orchard in 1653; and 1658 saw Observations on some part of Sr. Francis Bacon's naturall history as it concerns, fruit-trees, fruits, and flowers. Hartlib used the preface of A Desighe for Plentie to advertise Austen's forthcoming A Treatise of Fruit-Trees, and Austen subsequently dedicated his book to Hartlib.9

Also part of Hartlib's circle was John Beale, whose Herefordshire Orchards was written as a letter to Hartlib in 1656. It was through Hartlib that Beale was introduced to John Evelyn; the two men were to become great correspondents and almost kindred souls in their mutual enthusiasm for gardening and husbandry. And in this way the issue of cider passed, after Hartlib's death and with the institution of the Royal Society, into the orbit of early modern science. A number of articles in the Society's Philosophical Transactions were dedicated to methods for producing cider, and fruit tree planting was established as part of the agenda pursued by the Society's Georgical or Agricultural Committee, instituted in 1664.10 Notable too was Ralph Austen's decision, in 1665, to rededicate his Treatise of Fruit-Trees to Royal Society Fellow Robert Boyle. His new dedicatory address lays stress on such Royal Society tenets as experience, experimentation, the use of plain language, the sharing of what had been closely guarded secrets. And – also in keeping with Royal Society dogma – the spiritual reform so central to Hartlib's concerns was downplayed. As an ecumenical and nonsectarian association, the Royal Society was wary of promoting a radical Protestant agenda. And Austen, clearly aware of the new parameters under which his treatise was appearing, not only claimed that his work would serve to increase the king’s revenues, but that it was "worthy the most serious Considerations and Endeavours of the Royal Society" because it was, in fact, "a Royall Work."11

But it was undoubtedly Evelyn's Sylva, Or a Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominions that most effectively brought the issue of cider to a wide audience.12 Sylva, although commissioned

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9 "I am the more willing to divulge this brief Treatise upon this Subject, because it will serve as a fore-runner to a larger Volume of Fruit-trees, which an experienced friend of mine, Mr. Ralph Austrinuth in readiness to put forth at Oxford […] which now he is putting to the Press, as by his own Letter written in November last 1652 he doth informe me: therefore I intend in this Preface and by this Treatise, as by a small taste of so good a master, both to raise thine appetite and quicken thy desire to see that larger Work, and to stay thy stomach a little till it come forth […]" Hartlib, A Desighe for Plentie.


12 Evelyn also produced a number of translations of French works on orchards and fruit trees: The Manner of Ordering Fruit-Trees, by Le Gendre, in 1660; The French Gardiner Instructing
by the Officers of the Navy to encourage timber tree planting, included *Pomona, or an Appendix Concerning Fruit-Trees, in relation to Cider.* Following the compositional structure used by Hartlib, it was a compendium of a number of short pieces by various contributors. Repeating information and at times even contradicting each other, they formed nothing like a coherent whole. Evelyn, acknowledging this cacophonous character, explained that although some of the following Discourses seem less constant, or (upon occasion) repugnant to one another, they are to be consider’d as relating to the several gusts, and guises of persons and Countries, and not to be looked upon as recommended Secrets. With *Pomona,* Evelyn sought to amass knowledge of regional, local, and variable practices; the overarching goals, in line with broader Royal Society aims, were to disseminate information, promote cultivation, and encourage experimentation.

Evelyn’s *Sypha* established tree planting as a central component of land improvement, and its concerns were taken up by a host of later books on gardening. Moses Cook’s *The Manner of Raising, Ordering, and Improving Forest and Fruit Trees* of 1676 acknowledged its inspiration from Evelyn, and included a long section on cider. In the same year John Worldige’s *Vinetum Britannicum, or a Treatise of Cider* appeared, and in 1677 John Beale and Anthony Lawrence published *Nurseries, Orchards, Profitable Gardens and Vineyards Encouraged.* The influence of Evelyn’s text was still to be felt in the following century, although treatises such as John Lawrence’s *The Clergyman’s Recreation* of 1715, Richard Bradley’s *New Improvements in Planting and Gardening* of 1717, and Stephen Switzer’s *Ichnographia Rustica* of 1718 evidenced more interest in orchards and espaliered fruit trees than in cider per se. Betty Langley’s *Pomona* of 1729—notwithstanding Stafford’s letter — was in essence a very different kind of book: a luxurious folio volume of directions for raising apple trees with a large section of lavish plates illustrating varieties of apples. Although cider continued to be produced and consumed during the eighteenth century, its reign as an intoxicating subject was over.

In common with most seventeenth century husbandry manuals, these

How to Cultivate all sorts of Fruit-Trees, and Herbs for the Garden, by de Bonnefons, in 1669; Rene Rapin’s *Of Gardens* in 1673; and De La Quintinie’s *The Compleat Gardener; Or, Directions for Cultivating and Right Ordering of Fruit-Gardens and Kitchen-Gardens,* in 1693. However, none has any substantial discussion of cider.

It also contained the *Kalendarium Hortense.* As *Sypha* went through numerous editions over the years until Evelyn’s death, it became the repository for various fragments of his writings on gardens that were originally intended to form his great unfinished work on gardening, the *Elysium Britannicum.* A transcript of this vast manuscript has recently been published as *Elysium Britannicum or The Royal Gardens,* ed. John E. Ingram (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

In addition to Evelyn’s contribution, *Pomona* included Beale’s ‘ Aphorisms concerning Cider’; Sir Paul Neil’s ‘Discourse of Cider’; John Newburgh’s ‘Observations Concerning the Making and Preserving of Cider’; Doctor Smith’s ‘Concerning Cider’ and Captain Taylor’s ‘Of Cider’.

works on cider emphasized practical application, and were made up, for the most part, of detailed directions for cultivating fruit trees and making cider. These recommendations – perhaps unsurprisingly – varied widely, according to the region, its particular crops, local habits of brewing, the predominance of an oral tradition, individual taste, and because the making of cider was apparently a delicate business: cider could be too sour, too sweet, full of particles, slimy and stringy, off-colored, bitter, or rotten. Despite individual differences, however, most writers agreed that making cider required a six-step process: picking, resting, grinding, pressing, fermenting, and bottling.

To begin with, a great quantity of apples was needed – it took between 18 and 24 bushels of apples to produce one hoghead of cider – and this fruit needed to be fully ripe. According to Moses Cook, if you find the Kernels Brown, or the Seed rattle in the Apple, as in some they will, or if you see them begin to fall much in still weather; or if you find them to handle like a dry piece of wood, sounding in your hand as you toss them up; then you may go to gathering as fast as you please [...]. While gathering, great care had to be taken to ensure that the fruit did not bruise, for a single bruise led inevitably to rot, and one rotten apple could spoil the entire harvest, making the fruit useless for cider. Some writers were so cautious they counselled picking each apple by hand and laying it in a basket cushioned with woolen fabric; others, perhaps more aware of the enormous amount of time such a procedure would take, gave their readers permission to shake the fruit down from the tree, provided that the ground beneath was well cushioned by woolen blankets lying upon layers of barley straw.

After the harvest, the apples were left to rest. According to Beale, cider apples ‘require full maturity, which is best known by their natural fragrancy; and then also, as ripe Grapes require a few mellowing days, so do all Apples.’ During this time it was essential that rot be prevented. All leaves and other

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16 Guards against ‘ruopy’ cider and perry were frequently mentioned by writers. This was a condition that affected many drinks in the age before pasteurization; ale often became roppy, as did milk.
17 This summary is based on the directions found in the following texts (see n. 8 above for full references): Austen, A Treatise of Fruit-Trees, Beale, Herefordshire Orchards; Beale and Lawrence, Nurseries, Orchards, Profitable Gardens and Vineyards Encouraged; Cook, The Manner of Raising, Ordering, and Improving Forest and Fruit Trees (1679); Evelyn, Pomona, contained in Sylva, Or a Discourse of Forest-Trees; Parkinson, Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris. Exceptions will be noted individually.
21 Mr Smith says they should be ground immediately and not hoarded; see his ‘Concerning Cider’, Pomona, p. 46.
Fig. 10.1: An apple press and, in the background, hedgerows planted with fruit trees. Frontispiece, J.W. Gent, The Second Part of Systima Agriculturae, or the Mistery of Husbandry & Vinetum Britannicum or Treatise of Cider, &c.t. (1689). By permission of The British Library, BL 1490.s.21.
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extraneous matter were to be removed, and although most writers assumed that the apples would lie in piles, they also cautioned of the potential for bruising, 'which soon turns to rottenness; and better sound from the Tree then rotten from the heap.' In order to insulate the fruit from any damp, clay or earth floors would be covered with straw, reeds, or boards. The apples would then lie for a week to ten days if they were ripe when gathered, three weeks to a month if they were winter fruit or very green. When the apples began to sweat it was time to press.

Extracting juice from the fruit could be accomplished in a number of ways: 'Some have cider-Mills on purpose, wherein they grind the Apples, as Tanners do their bark, and then bring them to the Press; others Pound them in Troughs, till they be small; it comes all to one' (see Fig. 10.1). Improvements to cider mills continued throughout the century, and writers such as Beale and Worlidge used their texts to publicize new machines. Beale wrote that he 'saw a Mill in Somersetshire which grinds half a Hogshead at a grist, and so much the better ground for the frequent rolling,' while Worlidge used the title page of the second edition of his Vinetum Britannicum to publicize a 'New-Invented Ingenio or Mill, for the more expeditious making of Cider' (see Fig. 10.2). After standing overnight, the ground-up apples were pressed, and the resulting juice was immediately put into barrels, clean and specially prepared for fermentation (see Fig. 10.3).

Fermentation seems to have been a somewhat mysterious process. Disagreements are evident in the texts between those writers who recommended that barrels have a vent hole, and those who feared that allowing air into and out of the barrel impeded fermentation. Beale's instructions for this stage of the process exude a sense of urgency: 'Soon after grinding it should be press'd, and immediately be put into the Vessel, that it may ferment before the spirits be dissipated; and then also in fermenting time the Vent-hole should not be so wide as to allow a prodigal waste of the spirits; and as soon as the ferment begins to allay, the Vessels should be filled of the same, and well stopped.' The liquor was to stay in the barrels until fermentation was complete, something that often occurred around the end of March. Finally, 'When Cider is setl'd, and altogether, or almost clarifi'd, then to make it

23 Beale, 'Aphorisms', Pomona, p. 23.
26 See Assten, A Treatise of Fruit-Trees, p. 145.
27 Beale, 'Aphorisms', Pomona, p. 23.
28 Worlidge, Vinetum Britannicum: Or A Treatise of Cider.
29 On barrels, see Newburgh, Pomona, p. 42, and Taylor, who includes an image, Pomona, p. 49.
30 Thomas Willis's De fermentatione (Loudon, 1660), is mentioned by Sir Paul Nelle as a source of information.
31 Beale, 'Aphorisms', Pomona, p. 23.
32 Ibid., p. 24; Smith, 'Concerning Cider', Pomona, p. 46; Nelle says the beginning of April, 'Discourse', Pomona, p. 38.
Fig. 10.2: Technical advances in cider making. Frontispiece, John Worlidge, *Vinetum Britannicum: Or A Treatise of Cider, And such other Wines and Drinks that are extracted from all manner of Fruits Growing in this Kingdom* (2nd edn, 1678). By permission of The British Library, BL Eve.a.47.
spriteful and winy, it should be drawn into well cork'd and well bound bottles, and various ingredients could be added to improve the taste. A bit of sugar (lump sugar was preferred to loose, as the latter tended to be 'sophisti-cated with Lime, Allome, and other things') or a few raisins could mitigate any tendency toward asperity, while other recommendations included juniper, ginger, rosemary, bay, wheat, eggs, figs, mustard, syrup of raspberries, or even rotten apples. Finally, the liquor being thus well Bottled, may be kept in several places, either in Gravel or Sand, in a Cellar up to the neck, and some may be sunk down into water, in some secure, convenient place; or otherwise to keep them cool, and exclude the Aire, especially in the heat of Sommer. Made, bottled, and stored, the cider could last for a variable amount of time, but most writers agreed that it should be consumed within the year.

The types of apples and pears recommended for cider varied by region and by period, but in general, the harder, sourer, and, in general, more unpleasant to eat the fruit was, the better it tended to be for making drink. As early as

33 Beale, 'Aphorisms', Pomona, p. 29; for more on bottling, see Taylor, 'Of Cider', Pomona, p. 30.
34 Anstey, A Treatise of Fruit-Trees, p. 147.
36 Beale, 'Aphorisms', Pomona, p. 28; Newburgh, 'Observations', Pomona, p. 42. Taylor doesn't approve of adding spices, but allows for syrup of raspberries: 'Of Cider, Pomona, pp. 30, 47.
37 Anstey, A Treatise of Fruit-Trees, p. 147.
38 This, however, is contradicted by Nelle, who explicitly sets out to prove that cider made from eating apples is superior to that made from 'hard apples' or crab: see his 'Discourse', Pomona, p. 31.
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1629 the apothecary John Parkinson asserted in his Paradisi in Sole that 'it is usually seene that those fruits that are neither fit to eate raw, roasted, nor baked, are fittest for Cider, and make the best'.

Likewise, 'the Perry made of Choke Peares, notwithstanding the harshenesse, and evil taste, both of the fruit when it is greene, as also of the iuyce when it is newe, doth yet after a fewe months become as milde and pleasant as new made, and will hardly bee knowne by the sight or taste from it'.

This property of wild, bitter fruits to produce good cider and perry was one much commented on in the seventeenth century, as it was thought by some to show 'the goodnesse of God, that hath given such facility to so wilde fruits, altogether thought uselesse, to become useful, and apply the benefit thereof both to the comfort of our soules and bodies'.

However, for Parkinson there was no point in discussing crabs or wild apples at any length because 'Wildings and Crabs are without number or use in our Orchard, being to be had out of the woods, fields, and hedges rather then any where else'.

Being wild plants, they were outside the realm of cultivation, and thus had no place in the refined, enclosed space of the orchard. However, as educated men began to turn their attention to fruit tree cultivation, and books on orchards began to multiply, it began to be clear that crab apples were worthy of more considered attention. As with pears, where the hardest and most bitter fruits made the best perry, so too it was confirmed that crab apples and 'wildings' made the best cider. Particular success was had with one type of fruit originally known as the Skidmore Crab, which, sometime in the 1630s or 1640s, was rechristened the Redstreak or Redstake Apple.

In Austen's curious A Dialogue, or Familiar Discourse, and conference betwixt the Husbandman, and Fruit-trees—a treatise in the form of a question-and-answer session between the farmer and his trees—when the husbandman asks why the Redstake Apple, which makes the 'rare Cider of Herefordshire' was formerly known as the Skidmore Crab, the fruit trees answer: 'It's true, we grew, and bore Fruits for many yeares; and our Fruits were called Skidmore Crabs, and were very much undervalued; and in disparagement for many yeares; but when our Natures were considered, and tried and men had Experience of us, our Fruit was found to be better then any other sort of Fruit for Cider; and now are we every where cried up, and in great esteeme amongst all men.'

By the time of Pomona's publication, the esteem accorded the Redstake Apple was well established: Beale writes that the use of Redstreaks "'Tis lately spread all

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39 Parkinson, Paradisi, p. 589.
40 Ibid., p. 594.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 588.
43 This date is an estimate. Parkinson, writing in 1629, clearly has little interest in crab apples, while Austen, in his A Dialogue, or Familiar Discourse of 1651, and in his 1653 A Treatise of Fruit Trees speaks about the recent esteem that Redstreak apples have attained.
44 Austen, A Dialogue, or Familiar Discourse, p. 58.
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over Herefordshire; and he that computes speedy return, and true Wine, will think of no other Cider-apple, till a better be found; 45 Dr Smith names the 'Red-Strake' as one of the best fruits for cider used in Gloucestershire, 46 and Capt. Taylor writes that cider from pepins and other varieties cannot compare to 'the Cider drawn from the Cider-apple, among which the Red-stakes bear the Bell; a Fruit in it self scarce edible'. 47 And in Workidge's *Vinetum Britannicum*, the Redstrake's preeminence is proclaimed by the frontispiece, where the illustration of a cider press names the Redstreak as the generic fruit of choice (see Fig. 10.2). From crab to apple, weed to crop, the case of the Skidmore Crab brings up larger issues about attitudes toward wild nature and the reciprocal role of cultivation. 48

The Skidmore Crab, like the Red-Hill Crab discussed earlier, had no need of a name when it grew wild in hedgerows, so inedible that even pigs would turn their snouts up at it. However, once its use was discovered, it was allowed to enter the space of cultivation and civilization: it became an apple. Its move from wild, useless and unnamed, to useful and domesticated required an act of naming, and this name ensured that it could be recognized and therefore cultivated. The process of domesticating the wild, of using human ingenuity to make fertile or productive what had been seen as barren or useless, illustrated by the case of the Skidmore Crab, introduces what is perhaps the central term of the seventeenth-century discourse of husbandry: improvement.

Improvement was a word whose significance lay on many levels. The ideology of improvement was used both in tracts advocating a general enrichment of the land through husbandry – the conversion of waste lands into fertile fields – and in those whose focus was apple-tree planting and cider. 49 Beginning in 1652 with Hartlib's *A Desaigne for Plentie*, a multifaceted argument was set forth whose main tenets would be repeated, with little variation, throughout the period's literature on cider, notwithstanding the shift in patronage from the Protestant and parliamentarian Hartlib to the royalist and ecumenical Royal Society. Arguing for the planting of fruit trees of identifiable English provenance – apple, pear, walnut, and quince – the anonymous author proposed that a law be made to encourage their propagation both on privately held lands, and on 'all Wastes and Commons'. 50 The promotion of fruit tree

46 Smith, *Concerning Cider*, *Pomona*, p. 46.
47 Taylor, *Of Cider*, *Pomona*, p. 47.
48 This process is, of course, an earlier parallel to the story of the Royal Wilding. It is perhaps significant that until the eighteenth century does the wild origin of the tree receive emphasis in the formulation of the new name.
49 Ralph Austen, in his dedicatory address to Samuel Hartlib in *A Treatise of Fruit-Trees*, cites his precursors in Hartlib's publication program, including Blith's *The English Improver: Improved Child's letter in Samuel Hartlib his Legacy, 1651*; and the anonymous *A Designe for Plentie of 1652*.
50 Hartlib, *A Desaigne For Plentie*, p. 6.

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planting thus went beyond encouraging landowners to plant orchards in their gardens, but extended to all kinds of land, both cultivated and uncultivated. The proposal called for two types of additional planting: mixing fruit trees with hedgerows in banks and along the edges of fields (see Fig. 10.1), and placing single trees in the middle of arable fields at a considerable distance from one another.\footnote{Vittoria Di Palma's *Ichnographia Rustica* of 1718 illustrates the longevity of some of these ideas. Switzer advocated a rural style of gardening that mingled garden and plantation, and his engraving of Paston (an idealization of his work at Grimsthorpe) clearly shows individual trees planted in the middle of arable plots.} Behind this scheme was the ideal of making the waste fruitful, of taking scraps of land commonly thought to be unusable, or uncultivable — commons, wastes, banks, hedgerows — and making them productive. Fruit trees were particularly suitable for this as they tended not to require very fertile soil to flourish: "Fat land is not best for Cider fruit, but common arable," wrote Beale, and others commented on the ability of the pear tree, in particular, to flourish in hard, stony, unpromising ground. This call for the planting of fruit trees outside of the traditional space of the orchard can be seen as part of a larger ongoing process of extending the aesthetic vision formerly reserved for the enclosed spaces of pleasure grounds to the landscape as a whole — making all of England, in effect, into one vast garden. The benefits of this proposal were seen to be manifold.

First, it was argued that this scheme would benefit the poor. Using arguments similar to those used to justify the enclosure of commons, these writers claimed not only that fruit tree planting would provide employment, but also that the fruit produced could serve as food and drink to nourish the destitute.\footnote{Beale, *Aphorisms*, *Panema*, p. 25.} The increase in cider production would, it was argued, lessen the need for other drinks such as ale and beer, and this would mean that that land currently used for the cultivation of barley and hops could be used for wheat instead. Finally, the wood of the fruit trees would provide timber for fuel, and, with the decrease in beer production, more wood could be saved in order to be used for carpentry. The positive effects of fruit tree planting would strengthen the nation, increase its self-sufficiency and economy, and result in greater plenty and a better quality of life for all.

The nationalism of these arguments is pronounced, and appeared in various guises. Apples and pears and their wines were, these authors claim, suitable to the English climate and thus tailored to English constitutions. Arguing that climate and taste went hand in hand, Evelyn wrote that "we English [are] generally more for insipid, luscious, and gross Diet, then for the spicy, poignant, oyle, and highly relish'd (witness our universal hatred of Oyle, French-wine, or Rhenish without Sugar, our Doating on Currans, Figgs, Plum-pottage, Pies, Pudding, and Cake)," implying that an English constitution should, by rights,
be bred on English products.\textsuperscript{54} Beale, too, looked forward to the day when 'good Ale, good Beer d'Angleterre, good Cider, and Brandies drawn from English wines, which are all of English growth, and English Manufacturers, shall raise a greater profit, both at home and by exportation, than hath sometimes been gained by our Staple-trade'.\textsuperscript{55} The wholesome self-sufficiency that would supposedly result from large-scale cultivation of apple and pear trees would result in England relying less on foreign imports of wines, and perhaps also be able to tip the balance in favor of exports over imports.

The local and rural connotations of cider, however, needed to be combated before the drink could become prized by the nation's gentry. Evelyn aimed to give cider a royal pedigree by stressing 'how much this beverage was esteemed by His late Majesty, and Court',\textsuperscript{56} and further attempted to undermine the aristocratic associations of wine by noting that few could bear to drink it without adding sugar or other substances. Pinning on the dual connotations of the term sophisticated, he dubbed wine 'the Cheat' and drew attention to the 'Transformations, Transmutations, Adulterations, Basterdzings, Brewings, Trickings, and Compassings of this Sophisticated God'.\textsuperscript{57} Not artificial and aristocratic wine, but genuine and natural cider was to be the drink of choice for the nation's landowners.

Given the promotional tenor of these texts, it is hardly surprising that the potential negative effects of cider are barely mentioned. Drunkenness, for example, makes only one appearance, when Beale remonstrates against the difficulty of exporting cider from its place of origin: 'And by defect of transportation, our Store of Cyder is become a Snare to many, who turn God's Blessing into wantonness and drunkenness.'\textsuperscript{58} Instead, it is beer, ale, and wine that are targeted as the source of unseemly conduct, with 'the multiplicity of men practicing Brewing, and Malting' characterized as 'rather a bane than a benefit to this Common-wealth; ministring occasion to thousands of blinde and unnecessary Tipling-houses, whereby drunkennesse, disorder, and dangerous plots are fomented and nourished to the great dishonour of God, and disturbance of the State and Commonwealth'.\textsuperscript{59} Cider, instead, will provide the 'deliverance of multitudes' from the rapid and perilous sequence of 'Idlenesse, Beggary, Shame, and consequently, Theif, Murther, and (at last) the Gallows'.\textsuperscript{60} The only negative attribute of cider and perry commonly mentioned – discussed by Austen in a chapter entitled 'Windiness of Cider, only at first' – is dismissed as a side effect that soon disappears once one becomes accustomed to drinking fruit-based beverages on a regular

\textsuperscript{54} Evelyn, \textit{Pomona}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{55} Beale and Lawrence, \textit{Nurseries, Orchards, Profitable Gardens and Vineyards Encouraged}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{56} Evelyn, \textit{Pomona}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Beale, \textit{Herefordshire Orchards}, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{59} Hartlib, \textit{A Design For Plente}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{60} Austen, 'Dedication', \textit{A Tracts of Fruit Trees}, n.p.
Vittoria Di Palma

basis. Instead, what was extolled were cider’s health benefits – cider was said to be particularly good for stomach ailments, for promoting long life, and for banishing that English malady, melancholy.

But finally, and most importantly, the issue of improvement had spiritual, as well as material consequences. Austen linked religious and horticultural aims explicitly by employing biblical arguments to justify his promotion of fruit tree cultivation: ‘God planted a Fruit-garden; That is, He caused a parcell of ground to bring forth Plants and Trees most exquisite and usefull for man, and enriched that place with more fruit-fulness and beauty, then any other part of the Earth, and called it Eden, that is, a place of Pleasures.’ And if an orchard was like Eden, so the husbandsman was like Adam: God ‘saw that a Garden of Fruit-trees was the meest place upon all the Earth, for Adam to dwell in, even in his state of perfection’ and gave to Adam ‘in his innocency’ the task ‘to keepe and order the Garden of Fruit-Trees [ . . . ] for his greater delight and pleasure: so that his implantation, as it is ancient, so it is honourable’.

However apples, in particular, were also invested with a dubious moral charge. Often identified as the fruit used by Eve to tempt Adam, the apple in these treatises has a rather ambivalent position. The speaking trees of Austen’s Dialogue state that they ‘were present, & stood by, when thou, and thy wife, did both of you, transgresse the Command of our Creator, in the Garden of Eden, in that yee did eate of the Forbidden Fruit’, and caution the husbandman that he not take too much pleasure in the sensual delights of an orchard for ‘a serpent may be hid even amongst pleasant, and beautiful flowers; the old Serpent is still alive; that bit, and stung thy first Parents in the Garden of Eden they setting their minds too much upon the beauty, and excellency of the Fruits that they saw.’ Rather than being simply a recitation of Scripture, this parable illuminates what was likewise, for many seventeenth-century writers, a present danger: for, as the trees aver, ‘thou maiest be sure he hath not lost any of his Majestie’s Power, or Policy; but is watchful day, and night, to do thee, and others mischief.’ Both original fruit and vehicle of original sin; equally the means by which to regain Eden, and bearing responsibility for its loss, the apple was a fruit whose cultivation crystallized a contemporary tension between science and spirituality, an uneasy balance between the need to know, and the mortal temptation to know too much.

And it is in this dual sense that the discourse of improvement attains its most significant implications. By tilling the soil, by taming the wild, by making

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63 Ibid., p. 22.
64 Ibid.
65 Austen, A Dialogue, or Familiar Discourse, pp. 2–3.
67 Ibid.

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the sterile fertile, humans were following God's decree to Adam and Eve after they were banished from the Garden of Eden. Sent out into a wilderness of weeds and thorns to mix their labor with the soil, the first humans thus provided the pattern for salvation. And in this identification of improvement of the soil with improvement of the soul, apple tree cultivation held a privileged place. If England were to be planted so that it abounded 'with goodly Fruit-trees, and other Profits, where now are barren Wasts: Might it not then be called another Canaan, flowing with Milke and Hony, of which it is recorded, that there were Fruit-trees in abundance? This vision of the waste and wilde places all abounding with fruitfull trees (like the Garden of God) keeping their order, and distance: each one offering the weary traveller some little collation to quench his thirst, and refresh his spirits; inviting him to rest under their shadow, and to taste of their delicates, and to spare his purse' (a benefit, the author adds, 'well known in the Western Counties of this our England') was that of England as Eden. The widespread cultivation of apple trees would mean, in effect, recreating paradise in England, redeeming the country's sins, and populating it with moral, healthy, and wealthy denizens, drinking cider in their very own Elysium Britannicum. Not merely fit for Adam and Eve, or the heathen gods for that matter, through the discourse of improvement cider was proclaimed the tipple of choice for the English citizen.

49 ibid., p. 9.