



www.weather.com



# The Gazette

Community News for Galax, Grayson, and Carroll

JOB



HOME



AUTO



FOR SALE



Home

News

Sports

Obituaries

Classifieds

Archives

Menus

Events

Contact Us

Opinion

Subscribe

Public Record

Website Directory

Photo Gallery

Special Sections

Visitors' Guide

Friday, June 1, 2007

## FEATURED ADVERTISERS

Featured Ads

Real Estate

Automotive

Notices-Legals

## Southern Showcase Housing of Galax

"You're not just living with Southern Showcase, YOU'RE LIVING GOOD"

## Archives

### The time is ripe for cider

By CHRISTOPHER BROOKE Staff Reporter

DUGSPUR - Cider making will go on, despite two hard frosts that descended on Diane Flynt's orchard on a hillside in Dugspur this spring.

Many of the more than 30 varieties of apples that Flynt grows for Foggy Ridge Cider on part of the old Spence family farm survived the first freeze that stripped many fruit trees in Cana of their buds.

Her trees looked like they could bear this year, because they weren't as far along as those in the warmer part of the county.

But then the second frost fell and froze out much of the fruit that might have grown in the orchard she's been tending for nine years.

The damage to this year's crop came just before Foggy Ridge Cider started preparations for its grand opening on Memorial Day weekend.

Setting up her hard cider making business has been an effort that began 13 years ago when she and her husband bought enough land for a home and a small orchard - now 15 acres with 1,000 trees - after Flynt contemplated what to do in retirement from her corporate- and leadership training consultancy.

"We fell in love with Carroll County 13 years ago and bought our property here," she recalled. "We had been looking for land for five years in other parts of Virginia, but when we found this area, we didn't need to look anymore."



Check-up: Diane Flynt tests the health of trees in her apple orchard in Dugspur, which Foggy Ridge Cider's production is dependent on. The trees are healthy, though a spring frost destroyed fruit that was budding on the branches.

Not just a number.

VIRGINIA STATE



JULY 13-14 2007

Click Here to Visit Our Website



Free Recipes • Articles  
Message Boards

Flynt planted apple trees herself to test the varieties for taste and growing in the mountain climate.

In the eight years it took for the trees to reach full production, Flynt devoted herself to learning everything she could about making hard cider.

That's included a stint working with cider makers in England, where it's a much more popular beverage.

Flynt's learned her share of apple lore and history during her studies.

Some of that history will go into Foggy Ridge's 750 milliliter bottles, after a friend shared grafting wood from Virginia crab apple trees at Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States.

Those heirloom apples become part of the blend that makes “Foggy Ridge's First Fruit,” in “a slightly sweet refreshing cider to drink.”

Flynt also shared apple wood with Extension agent Wythe Morris for grafting classes that he teaches.

She felt excited about making Foggy Ridge's Web site a resource for growers and other interested parties by posting detailed bloom-through-harvest information about several of her varieties.

As Flynt has found that people have fond memories of apple trees, she set up an apple stories section on the Web site, so visitors can post theirs.

The crop that came in at Dugspur last year will produce about 350 cases total of the dry Serious Cider, the Foggy Ridge First Fruit and Sweet Stayman Cider from the only place in Virginia that concentrates its efforts on making cider.

Full descriptions of the ciders and the apples they're blended from and the kinds of foods they go with can be found at [www.foggyridgecider.com](http://www.foggyridgecider.com).

Flynt's interest in growing produce, cultivated over the years, goes back to her father's abundant gardens.

She's motivated to do something different with her apples. “We wanted to do two things: to grow something and make something.”

Cider production, Flynt feels, is an artisan pursuit and a craft she can take pride in.

Making cider means that she doesn't have to pay as much attention to

how an apple looks than how it tastes.

She doesn't have to spray fruit to make it pretty on the outside, which might apply to apples headed to a market stand.

Flynt has culled apples and trees chiefly for their cider-making qualities.

Promotional materials for Foggy Ridge mention its different perspective on apple-growing and the wine-making industries.

“Over 30 American, English and French apple varieties - ugly and hard to grow but full of the tannin, acid and aroma needed for fine cider - blend to create a traditional hard cider crafted with modern techniques,” the poster says.

“Our tasting room has no scented candles or T-shirts - only cider and apples.”

As her career as a consultant drew to a close, Flynt felt she'd had enough of intangible results. “I wanted my last career to be about creating something tangible.”

Other wineries have given Foggy Ridge their support since the couple moved here. As it turns out, Paul Hric of West Wind Winery worked for Flynt's husband at a textile plant in Greensboro, N.C., where the couple's children and grandchildren still live.

“I think we'll always have a little bit of a toehold there, but this is home.”

Villa Appalaccia and Virginia Tech also provided assistance for Foggy Ridge's startup. Flynt said she owed a lot to Wayne Marshall for his help in keeping the orchard operating.

Foggy Ridge Cider opens for the first time to the public this Saturday and Sunday for cider, as well as cheese tastings from Meadow Creek Dairy and music.

Flynt wants to host regular events that offer a welcoming atmosphere to customers. If anybody drives for 45 minutes to get to Foggy Ridge, for example, she wants them to feel at home.

Foggy Ridge will also participate in things like the Blue Ridge Wine Trail with Blacksnake Meadery, also located in Carroll County, as well as Villa Appalaccia, Chateau Morrisette and others.

Though her crop suffered severe damage this year, Flynt says that Foggy Ridge will make the best of it.

“We're just going to grow apples and make cider and hopefully sell it,” she said.

[Print this story](#)