

We had an exciting day here on Coe Creek last week. Well, that should probably be modified to “what we call exciting.” It may not be something that would interest most residents of our area, but it was a big day for us.

The fruit trees we ordered last fall came this past week. Grown in Maine, they should be adaptable to our cold spot. They are all old varieties, and the Fedco catalog—I read it cover to cover—gives a detailed description of each variety. The catalog text covers the origin of the tree, what it is best used for, how large it will grow, and if it is early or late.

Two of the four apple trees we bought are replacements for old trees of the same variety that had their spot here for nearly a century. There are still two old Duchess of Oldenburg trees in the farmhouse yard, and they produce apples in good years. But, they are not in very good shape, so we bought a new Duchess to eventually take their place. There were two Wealthy trees between the farmhouse and the vegetable garden, and we lost both of those in storms years ago. Now, a new little Wealthy is within sight of the stumps of those old trees.

The other two apple trees are ones we have never grown. One, the Red Astrachan, is interesting in that it is thought to be from the Black Sea area. From there, it somehow made its way to Sweden and figures in the saga of Swedish emigration, Vilhelm Moberg’s classic novels. Kristina, the woman around whose life the stories are centered, yearned for a Red Astrachan from home. From Sweden, the apple was taken to England and then eventually came to Massachusetts in 1835. The catalog description states that “it is especially loved for its distinctive flavor in pies.” That sounded good to me.

The fourth apple tree we ordered was entirely unknown to us, but it looked interesting and seemed as if it would thrive in our environment. The words “disease and pest resistant” also resonated with us. The Liveland Raspberry, sometimes called the Lowland Raspberry, originated in Estonia, where its name was Suislepper. The catalog describes it as one of the hardiest and finest summer apples. It sounds as if it would ripen about the same time as the Yellow Transparent.

In addition to apple trees, we ordered two pear trees and a cherry tree. Pears like another variety for good pollination, so we bought two kinds. The Beurre Clairgeau, came to America from France in the 1850s. It is said to be a good canning and cooking pear and one that bears at a young age.

The other pear tree we purchased is a Dana Hovey. This is a winter pear that is known for its sweet flavor and good keeping—sometimes, as late as February.

The cherry tree we chose is a pie cherry similar to the Montmorency that has been grown in Michigan’s cherry belt for years. Garfield Plantation is very resistant to disease and will grow in Zone 3. Sounds like our kind of cherry!

We planted a few tame blackberries, too, and if they thrive, there will be jams and pies to justify their place in the garden.

So, that was the excitement at Coe Creek during the past week. Although, it wasn’t really the only event on the farm that I had anticipated for a long time. Back in the winter, still doing no shopping in person—and we still

are not—I ordered a regular, all-cotton clothesline. My clothesline broke last fall, and since I hang the washing in the basement during the winter, we did not put up the new clothesline until this past week when, finally, I could dry clothes outside again. 100 feet of new clothesline is a big treat! It is almost as satisfying as having brand new socks!