

Identification of perry pears

The National Perry Pear Centre at Hartpury offers an identification service primarily for perry pears, but, with limitations, for other pears

Identification days, together with a large display of perry pears, are usually held:

- On the afternoon of the second Sunday in September at Hartpury Orchard Centre
- At the Malvern Autumn show at Three Counties Agricultural Society showground (end September)
- At 'Big Apple' at Hellens, Much Marcle (second weekend of October)

If none of these dates are convenient, pears may be posted to, or left at the Orchard Centre and will be looked at as soon as possible. It is not possible to arrange an appointment to do this, so please leave the fruit in a bag on the bench under the leaflets if nobody is there, emailing info@nationalperrypearcentre.org.uk to say you have done this.

Address for posting: The Orchard Centre, Blackwell's End, Hartpury, Gloucester GL19 3DB

There is a fee of £5 per variety, payable to the Trust to help towards the cost of maintaining the national collection

Please read the notes below before you bring or send pears for identification

- Provide at least three specimens of each pear, they should be typical fruit, neither bruised nor imperfect, and should have reached maturity, showing characteristic size and colour. **With stalk intact.**
- If possible, bring a few leaves in good condition.
- If you are leaving more than one variety, please be sure to label them so can tell which is which when you receive a reply
- Give as many details as possible, eg the soil, age of the tree, how regularly it crops, its shape (photo helpful).
- An email address or s.a.e. for the reply.

It is not generally possible for anyone to view individual trees or visit orchards

Just because a tree appears to be old and the fruit is hard, it is not necessarily a perry pear.

Remember

- A perry pear is simply a seedling pear that has proved to produce good perry. **There are many seedling pears that are not perry pears.**
- To try to avoid an "unknown" reply, remember a single chance seedling will not be a known variety.
- It is fairly common in neglected orchards, for the original grafted variety to have died (through disease or due to competition from the rootstock). The rootstock will then grow into a well-formed tree with every appearance of deliberate planting.
- Perry is best made from a single variety or by very limited blending. Working orchards would have had a number of trees of relatively few varieties covering the early, mid and late seasons. There are unlikely to be lots of different varieties ripening at the same time.
- The variety may have lost its proper appearance through degeneration of the tree due to age. Distortions arise that result in characteristics that might even resemble other varieties.
- Was there any reason to plant a perry pear in the orchard? Perry pears are usually planted to fulfil a local need for the fruit, so if there is no history of perry production locally, it is unlikely to be a perry pear.
- Could it be a very late ripening dessert variety? Some need picking in October, but don't ripen until after Christmas!