British Apples & Pears

Regenerative farming for British apple and pear growers

Growing apple and pear trees is, by nature, regenerative. Trees remain in the ground for more than 20 years, with permanent grass or mixed sward alleyways.

Growers work with natural systems to restore and enhance soil health, biodiversity and ecosystem function, improve resource efficiency, and build resilient, productive orchards that produce high-quality British fruit for current and future generations.

As orchards mature and eco-systems develop the priorities and practices change. Consequently, regenerative fruit growing is based on continual improvement and the adoption of management approaches that deliver environmental, economic and social benefits. Typical practices include:

- Building healthy soils by maintaining permanent ground cover, minimising soil disturbance and increasing soil organic matter.
- Increasing biodiversity by establishing and managing diverse orchard habitats and functional vegetation that provide year-round food, shelter and breeding habitat for pollinators, beneficial insects, soil organisms, birds and other wildlife, strengthening natural ecosystem functions such as pollination and biological pest control.
- Selecting appropriate sites for new orchards and using grass margins and buffer zones around orchards to reduce soil erosion, nutrient run-off and leaching, while providing additional habitat for wildlife.
- Supporting natural pest and disease management alongside carefully targeted crop protection.
- Using water, nutrients and energy as efficiently as possible.
- Maximising use of each season's crop by directing fruit that does not meet retailer specifications to food banks, juice and other processed food ingredients or, where appropriate, local anaerobic digestion plants to generate renewable electricity, thereby minimising waste.
- Protecting and enhancing carbon stored in trees and soils.
- Measuring, learning and continually improving environmental performance.

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