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TOP STORY

## Fruitful beauty sleeps within drifts

Jason Maloney For Agri-View  
Jan 26, 2020



Bayfield Apple Company is open even during snowy winter days.

Jason Maloney/For Agri-View

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A beautiful blanket of white snow envelopes the Bayfield Peninsula in far-northern Wisconsin. The cold waters of partially frozen Lake Superior moderate winter cold as fruit trees slumber in orchards that provide apples, pears and other fruit in the summer

and fall. At first glance visitors see nothing going on, but just a little investigating will reveal activity on many farms. So it is at the Bayfield Apple Company on Bayfield County Highway J.

The Bayfield Apple Company is open year-round. Though visitors should call ahead to confirm winter hours, winter is a good time to visit the on-site retail store that's bursting with locally produced goodies. Michael Joyner manages the orchard and store. He said because much preparation of jam and other products takes place during winter, it makes sense to keep the retail store open. Watching Joyner and his co-workers bottle fresh apple cider on a cold winter day is a little like watching elves bottle liquid sunshine.

The operation occupies 55 acres including orchard, vegetable plots, pollinator garden, fallow land for expansion and woodland. Apple trees are planted in an intensive agricultural style. Rows of dwarf and semi-dwarf trees are planted close together to produce more apples per acre. Each year more land is brought into production. In addition to more than 40 varieties of sustainably grown apples and pears, berries and asparagus are available fresh in-season. Free-range pork, jams and apple butter are also available. A local winery uses apples grown at Bayfield Apple Company to produce hard cider, which is available alongside regular apple cider pressed at the orchard.

One challenge facing locally produced products is distribution to customers in the region. The Bayfield Apple Company offers products to customers in several ways. Some products are distributed through wholesalers to retail grocery stores. The Bayfield Foods Cooperative is an organization that runs a community-sponsored-agriculture system. It distributes seasonal boxes of locally produced vegetables, meats, fish and breads as well as goodies like cheese, honey and maple syrup. Many products produced by the Bayfield Apple Company wind up in those boxes delivered to subscribers. And visitors can stop at the orchard store to buy what they like. For people who dream of bottled liquid sunshine like jams and jellies during the long winter – but who live far away – they can visit [www.bayfieldapple.com](http://www.bayfieldapple.com) to order goods online.

During warm weather visitors are encouraged to walk the orchard and explore garden plots. At the orchard there are tours, spots to picnic and even a butterfly garden where people can learn about pollinators and their essential role in sustainable agriculture. It's

even possible to hike out to feed the pigs. In the winter months where there are often snow drifts a few feet deep in places, people tend to spend most of their time in the retail store.

The orchard trees look like a lonely group in the winter snow, but they aren't really lonely. They're just patiently waiting for the next growing season.

Visit [www.bayfieldapple.com](http://www.bayfieldapple.com) and [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) – search for “Bayfield Apple Company” – or call 715-779-5700 for more information.

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Jason Maloney is an “elderly” farm boy from Marinette County, Wisconsin. He’s a retired educator, a retired soldier and a lifelong Wisconsin resident. He lives on the shore of Lake Superior with his wife, Cindy, and Red, a sturdy loyal Australian Shepherd.