



Thomas and Maria Ann "Granny" Smith (1799–1870)

The 'Granny Smith' apple originated in Sydney Australia, in 1868. Its discoverer, [Maria Ann Smith](#), had emigrated from England in 1839 with her husband Thomas. They purchased a small orchard cultivating fruit. Smith had numerous children and was a prominent figure in the district, earning the nickname "Granny" Smith in her advanced years.

The first description of the origin of the 'Granny Smith' apple was not published until 1924. Smith had been testing French crab-apples for cooking, and throwing the apple cores out her window as she worked; she found that new seedlings sprung up underneath her kitchen windowsill. Smith took it upon herself to [propagate](#) the best of these and described the apples they produced as "all the appearances of a cooking apple", they were not tart, but instead, were "sweet and crisp to eat". She also noticed that the apples stored "exceptionally well and became popular" and "once a week she sold her produce at the local market"

Smith died only a couple of years after her discovery (in 1870), but her work had been noticed by other local planters. Edward Gallard was successful in marketing the apple locally, but it did not receive widespread attention until 1890. In that year, it was exhibited as "Smith's Seedling" at an Agricultural and Horticultural Show, and the following year it won the prize for cooking apples under the name "Granny Smith's Seedling". The apple was successful and the following year many were exhibiting 'Granny Smith' apples at horticultural shows.

Over the following years the Australian government actively promoted the apple, leading to its widespread adoption. Its worldwide fame grew from the fact that it could be picked from March and stored until November. Enterprising fruit merchants in the 1890s and 1900s experimented with methods to transport the apples overseas in cold storage. Because of its excellent [shelf life](#) the 'Granny Smith' could be exported long distances and most times of the year, at a time when Australian food exports were growing dramatically on the back of international demand. 'Granny Smiths' were exported in enormous quantities after the [First World War](#), and by 1975, 40 percent of Australia's apple crop was 'Granny Smith'.

Research the history of your favourite fruit.