

From [www.kelownadailycourier.ca](http://www.kelownadailycourier.ca)

## LOCAL

### Apple grower harvests awards

By Steve MacNaull

Sunday, November 15, 2009

It's been an award-filled week for Okanagan Centre apple grower Marc Van Roechoudt.

The Ambrosia apples he grows at his 18-hectare orchard on Goldie Road were judged the best in Canada at the Royal Winter Agricultural Fair, which wraps up today in Toronto.

As well, his Gala apples were deemed second best in the nation.

Meantime, in Penticton, at the annual B.C. Fruit Growers' Association horticultural forum and trade show, Van Roechoudt picked up the Golden Apple Award for consistent good orchard management and quality fruit.

"We have a great location here on the western-facing slope overlooking Okanagan Lake, and I'm very lucky to have Raymond Fischer as orchard manager to oversee all the things like pruning, thinning and fertilizing," said Van Roechoudt. "I'm 74 now, so I take a bit of a back seat to Raymond and my daughter Madeleine, who studied agriculture at UBC and in Europe and has been back for three years and will eventually take over."

Apple awards are a big deal in the Okanagan because apples are the Valley's biggest cash crop, worth \$130 million a year. Apples are also a symbol for the Okanagan and what the Valley is known for across Canada and around the world.

Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia also grow apples, but Okanagan orchardists dominated the Royal Winter Agricultural Fair awards.

Ambrosia is a new variety that's a hit with consumers for its crispness, juiciness, sweet, honeyed flavour and attractive, creamy colour with bright pink blush.

Ambrosia also a favourite of growers because it produces big yields in high-density orchards and lasts well in cold storage.

Last year, Van Roechoudt won the Gala award at the competition.

This year, his Galas slipped to second, behind Dave Powell of Summerland.

"That's OK," said Van Roechoudt with a laugh. "It's another Okanagan grower."

Copyright © Saturday, November 28, 2009 All material contained herein is copyrighted by The Okanagan Valley Group of Newspapers, a division of Continental Newspapers Canada Ltd. All Rights Reserved.