

The Apple Orchard: Deadliest place on Earth

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For Amusement

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The Apple Orchard: A family gathering place intended for the making of lifelong memories and apple cider. This American institution is more often than not associated with smiles, laughter and, for some reason, apples. Save for the apples bit, this cheerful image that the apple orchard regularly conjures up is entirely inaccurate. How is it inaccurate, you ask? First of all, stop asking stupid questions. Second of all, it is inaccurate because apple orchards are the most dangerous places on earth.

Let me say that again: Apple orchards are the most dangerous places on earth. I have always felt uneasy while at the orchard, but my latest visit to Anderson Orchard (my deathbed of choice) proved to me once and for all that anyone who enters that tree-lined cemetery is throwing their life to the mercy of the apple gods.

The first thing I see upon entering the orchard is the hay ride, a personal favorite to all visitors with plastic hips and high blood pressure. Most hay riders hop aboard the straw-covered vehicle to avoid walking the twenty feet to the Red Delicious forest paying little attention to the fact that the hay ride driver is 936 years old. This corpse-of-a-man not only outranks Johnny Appleseed in terms of seniority, but has also outlived Napoleon *and* Moses.

How anyone that age still has a hay ride-driving license is of utmost concern to me, seeing as any ride might be his last. My heart goes out to those aboard the hay ride when Mother Nature takes the wheel and decides the old man is finally done. Apple Orchard Death #1: The hay ride driver dies while driving, sending the hay tractor and trailer spinning wildly out of control and into a fiery crash.

As soon as I shake the hay ride (moving approximately 3 inches per hour), I make my way toward the market, an innocent-enough edifice filled with all sorts of Autumn treats. Winged gourds, Amish crap, apple butter, squash, some of those weird corn doll things that I could never make during craft days in kindergarten, etc.

Most traffic goes in and out of the market in ignorant bliss, failing to take note of this building's myriad murder tools. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the picking pole: a device created to make life easier on short people because they just won't shut up about their (lack of) height. The picking pole may look like a harmless apple-picking tool, but let's be serious: That death stick is just an accident waiting to happen. The pointy spikes, the heavy metal basket atop the difficult-to-manuever pole just screams "I'M GOING TO SEND SOMEONE TO THE HOSPITAL!"

Apple Orchard Death #2: An apple-picker loses control of the picking pole and the seven-foot long obituary-maker skewers a bystander.

I escape the market and its picking pole horrors, trying hard to ignore the stench of dead bodies wafting from the adjacent barn. *How many corpses are in there*, I wonder. The apple orchard's death toll probably climbs exponentially with each passing day—they have to stash the bodies somewhere, why not the barn?

As I contemplate this, my Mom comes up with the awful idea of taking pictures in the wooden

cut-out hole intended for people to stick their heads in and take a picture as an apple. How hilarious.

Until you get your head stuck and can't get out.

The ladder you're standing on may tilt precariously as you try desperately to escape the flat tree that has your life grasped within its splintery fingers. Your family laughs heartily as you struggle to escape this very inconvenient and unphotogenic death. Apple Orchard Death #3: Family picture goes horribly wrong. Enough said.

My Mom's ghastly picture idea is trumped by my Dad's corn maze idea. I catch a glimpse of the \$4 Corn Maze sign my Dad is pointing at. So, death only costs \$4 now? Seems reasonable. I pay one dollar less than five and get thrown into an endless labyrinth of god knows what. This is the apple orchard's most convenient killing machine: No one thinks to ask what sort of flesh-eating monsters are inside a corn maze, and once someone disappears, well...It's a corn maze. They'll make it out eventually, right?

Too bad eventually never comes. Apple Orchard Death #4: Being brutally ripped apart by a minotaur, werewolf, zombie, or Charlie Weis.

I escape the photo op and wisely forego the corn maze, but how much longer can I stay alive at this apple orchard? So many hidden horrors are just waiting to claim my life. I duck and dodge swarms of angry African killer bees, hoping against hope that their deadly sting won't make this day my last. I jump over the rotting apples littering the ground, well-aware that they're laden with all sorts of diseases—the Bubonic Plague, H1N1, being a USC fan...

If you are not convinced that apple orchards are the most dangerous places on earth and instead believe that this article is just a paranoid rant, well guess what?

You're right.

A fabric store is the most dangerous place on earth.



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