

Apple Blossom Festival signals the start of summer

■ Apple trees in full bloom for Memramcook's annual festival

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MEMRAMCOOK — There's a lot of pressure for the annual Fête des fleurs du pommier (Apple Blossom Festival) to fall on just the right days each year.

Being off by only a day or two could mean the main attraction of the event either hasn't shown up yet or has already come and gone.

The main draw for the village's annual festival, centred around Belliveau Orchard is, of course, the apple blossoms with their white and pink petals which cover the fruit trees.

Fortunately, the orchard's apple trees were in full bloom for this year's festival held over the weekend.

Robert Bourgeois, manager of the orchard and host of the festival, said an educated prediction usually saves the day when it comes to determining exactly when the apple blossoms will come.

"We do the festival the first weekend of June every year," he said. "There's only been one year in nine where we weren't full bloom."

"The weather has a lot to do with it too," Bourgeois added with warmer weather in May meaning the blossoms will spring up ahead of schedule.

This year, the apple blossoms appeared late last week and were in their prime during the festival's weekend. The flowers should fall to the ground by the middle of this week, giving a sign of the summer season about to begin.

"For us it kicks off our season for summer tourists," said Bourgeois. "We're open year round but when we do the festival, after that it seems to be a little bit better."

The sight and spectacle of blooming apple trees get people out into the fields, walking between the rows of apple trees, taking pictures and revelling in the sweet smell the blossoms give out.

"People like to see that," said Bourgeois. "It smells nice and it's a good time to be here."

"It looks so nice and beautiful," said Guy Lanteigne of Atholville, who was one of the people marvelling at the scenic view of the trees on Saturday, taking pictures at the sight.

In addition to celebrating the passing of the season, Memramcook's Apple Blossom Festival for the first time held a concert and beer garden on the orchard's site Saturday night. The concert under the big tent featured Acadian singer and songwriter Cayouche and Shediac's very own Jigeu.

Other events tied to the festival over the weekend included a barbecue, wagon rides around the orchard, guided tours of the Belliveau packing plant, wine and cider tasting, as well as the usual sales of apple pastries, apples and other apples products.

Bourgeois said he expects most people will



RON WARD/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Mario Belliveau, 5, of Memramcook enjoyed an apple at Belliveau Orchard in Memramcook yesterday.

head off to the beach as the thermometer rises, but assured the orchard would still be busy in the midst of their growing season.

Another surge of orchard visits is expected again in the fall when people come by to have first pick of the harvest and to take in beautiful scenery of another kind from another season: the fall foliage.



RON WARD/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Samuel Frenette, 5, of Dieppe just decided to relax at Belliveau Orchard in Memramcook yesterday.