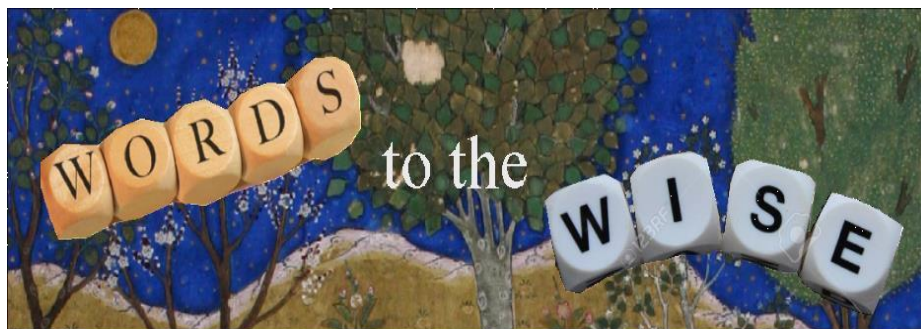




Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 32

September 2025

Comments from Linda

Fall semester is in full swing right now; students are starting to trickle in and get familiar with us. We have a healthy cohort of gerontology, nutrition, and psychology students so far and I look forward to seeing what they all come up with by the end of the semester.

Our summer was great and the momentum is still going. We are having some great guest speakers and will continue to do so throughout the semester. We record most of our 11:45 am lectures and it is amazing to see how often our YouTube page is viewed.

We have two new volunteers with us on a regular basis now. Linda Goode worked with Cari & Sharon at UC Davis in health education; she is a social worker and has already led some really insightful, worthwhile sessions. She will be having a “psychosocial wellness” approach to classes she offers and hope she will get involved, when she’s ready, to add to our mindfulness practice schedule. Cynthia Wright, a traveling partner of Cari’s, is a retired GI nurse, has also joined and she will get on our education schedule soon. In the meantime, we are grateful she is able to add to our nursing support.

Projects are always ongoing, and new ones brewing. Several of our program clients helped Henry & Dan, two PT students, collect data on endurance, strength, and balance issues spring and summer 2024. They will be presenting their data to us this coming week (Thursday) and will be sharing a poster at a California Physical Therapy meeting in Palm Springs the following week. Always fun to see how far our name is going. Hope to see you soon.

Linda



Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer
CWP Projects
New Volunteer, Linda Goode, LSW
Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucas, RD
Recipe Corner
Universe in a Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN
Exercise Reminders, Linda Paumer, MA
Puzzle fun

CWP Projects

List compiled by Linda Paumer

A recap of some of our projects:

Physical/Mental Abilities of our Group. I mentioned this in the summer & never got very far with it. It's still on the list, as I do want to see where this goes. Wish me luck in someday making it happen!

Summer Interns. We had some fun, enthusiastic students over the summer – I was proud of how willing they were to get involved. One of our summer students, Aryan, has one more week with us (he starts his 2nd year at UC San Diego soon); he will be greatly missed. He is always helpful, and his warm, charismatic personality is going to take him far. Hopefully he will still be around on breaks and again next summer.



Fall Prevention Training. Justin, a PT student, came up all summer for our 2:30 Friday balance activities sessions and Jasmine is now back, enthusiastically helping us and also recruiting several of her classmates to join in. These sessions are in-person and also on Zoom, and very worthwhile.

Gero 101. Somewhat fair to say this course is the bread & butter of our program, or maybe our program is the bread & butter for this course (I guess it works both ways). A primary mission of our program is serving students and our program now serves as the living lab for this introductory gerontology course, for which I am the instructor. I have six Zoom sessions set up this semester that are interactions between the students in this course and the clients in our program – there is a whole schedule posted. The first was this past Thursday, September 11th. I thought it went well and I got good feedback from some of the participants. Please do join these if you can. The next is Thursday, September 18th; and the topic will be nutrition.

Project with Kim Roberts. I really value the collaborations we have had with Kim and her psychology students over the years. We have two projects currently brewing -- they relate to gaming and cognitive function. You will see more about these very soon; please help out if it suits you. The biggest endeavor is filling out some surveys. Another project is actually going to have you playing some video games, and of course, participation is encouraged but very optional. But this sounds like it will be fun!

Nursing Assistance. Students in an RN to BSN program came up this summer, and I am pleased to report some of them are interested in continuing to volunteer when they can. Of course, we appreciate their help greatly; Nichole will be with us later this month.

Cooking. Our kitchen activities aren't really projects, but our goal of trying something new regularly is ongoing and luckily Debbie Lucas, our dietitian, and John will continue to do monthly cooking demonstrations, usually the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Please feel free to offer suggestions for things you'd like to try, keeping in mind our whole-food, plant-based goals.

Monthly Potlucks. We continue to have a whole-food, plant-based potluck the last Friday of every month. These are great opportunities to share some healthy food and also have a fun social interaction. Bringing a dish is definitely not a requirement! Please do try and attend September 26th this month.

Mental Wellness and the Fall Season

By Linda Goode, LCSW

Fall changes, like the turning of the leaves and the weather transitioning into the cooler months, are nature's way of reminding us to prepare ourselves for the winter months ahead. The Fall season can also impact mental health, and sometimes sneak up on us with the slow transition from summer to winter. Shorter days and reduced sunlight can also lead the body to produce less serotonin and increase production of melatonin (the sleep hormone). Some individuals may experience more feelings of low motivation and depression. This makes it even more important to prioritize taking care of yourself.



A few tips:

- ✂ Healthy habits like regular exercise can raise endorphins to help with physical health and mood.
- ✂ Spending time outdoors in nature when there is sunshine, with a gentle walk or to sit on a bench and enjoy the color of the leaves can help counter effects of shorter days.
- ✂ Socializing with others can help with building connections and strengthening support through the winter months.
- ✂ Preparing for daylight savings time in advance by making sure to get plenty of rest and sleep prior to the time change can help with this transition.
- ✂ Organizing closets to create easy access to layers of warmer clothes can help prepare for the changing weather.
- ✂ Stocking up with healthy options such as favorite teas and low sodium soups can help to stay hydrated during fall months.
- ✂ Seek out indoor hobbies, activities and books for reading to help with shorter daylight to prepare for the winter months.
- ✂ Make time to enjoy the Fall colors, and let go of any items you no longer need, like the falling leaves that make room for new growth in the coming Spring.



What's on your Fall Bucket List?

By Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

I love the changing of the seasons and fall is one of my favorites. I love the changing tree colors, raking leaves, going to Apple Hill and eating all things pumpkin. I especially love cooking things again without fearing the house will get too warm. It must be cooling off this week-end as I write this, because I have just gone through some of my recipes and decided on making artichoke paella for dinner. I have started making a list each season of the things I want to be sure to do, so that I don't forget. Here is a health and lifestyle-focused list for fall 2025.



1. Celebrate Fall Prevention Month (September) Work on balance to prevent falls by attending CWP balance classes, participating in Dave's Tai Chi classes, looking on YouTube for 'Fall prevention' exercises, practicing yoga (it also happens to be Yoga Month!) and then actually doing the exercises we learn. I've been enjoying Yoga with Adriene on YouTube.

Another factor in fall prevention is to maintain vitamin B₁₂ levels. A B₁₂ deficiency can cause irreversible damage to our nerves which may lead to falls. As we age, it is harder for our body to get the B₁₂ from our foods, so seniors should consider taking a supplement. A diabetes medication, Metformin (also called Glucophage), may contribute to a lower B₁₂ level. If you take Metformin, your doctor should request your B₁₂ level at least every 3 years. B₁₂-rich foods include animal proteins, but for those of us eating fully plant-based, we can get it from fortified foods, but a supplement is recommended. The supplement is cyanocobalamin, a synthetic B₁₂. This is a great infographic on B₁₂ recommendations and a food list.

<https://nutritionfacts.app.box.com/s/j3w6zg5kjc6vkgoy69i7i48zhe5i62u>

2. Honor Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October) with cancer-reducing lifestyle changes to lower risk. Not surprisingly, eating a whole-food, plant-based diet is one of the best ways to reduce cancer risk (including breast cancer). So let's focus this fall on more fruits and veggies, less animal foods, especially processed meats (a known carcinogen) and include cancer-fighting cruciferous veggies. Some of our fall cruciferous veggies to enjoy are Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, greens (kale, arugula, collards) and bok choy. Here's a recipe that John told me about that you might want to try. It's great and I add tofu too! This also checks an item off my 'fall list': to make soups and stews. <https://www.brandnewvegan.com/recipes/vegan-mushroom-bok-choy-soup> (see Recipe Corner).

3. Celebrate World Vegan Day every day, not just November 1! October is actually Vegetarian Awareness month which ends with World Vegan day on November 1. I like to celebrate these every day and encourage you to focus on more plant foods this fall. Of course we have to enjoy apples and pumpkin during the season. Apples are full of nutrients including soluble fiber which can help to lower cholesterol. Be aware that just because apples are so good for us, and hold a large place in a healthy, plant-based meal plan, all those fun apple treats at

Apple Hill may not be our best option. My favorite apple snack to bring to a get together or to get out when I have guests are sliced apples with pumpkin butter. I make my own pumpkin butter from this Minimalist Baker recipe (and have even given it to the neighbors for holiday gifts): <https://minimalistbaker.com/1-pot-apple-butter-date-sweetened/#wprm-recipe-container-72967>

Pumpkin (and all the winter squash) are an excellent source of beta carotene and fiber. Here are a few fun pumpkin and apple recipes to try:

<https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-soups-stews/roasted-red-pepper-pumpkin-soup-chickpeas/>

<https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-desserts/pumpkin-bread-pudding-recipe/>

<https://aplantifulpath.com/fat-free-apple-crisp/#wprm-recipe-container-2470>

<https://blog.fatfreevegan.com/2012/03/spicy-apple-walnut-salad-with-fat-free-balsamic-raisin-dressing.html>

4. Observe Diabetes Awareness Month (November) with a lifestyle that will reduce risk of developing diabetes or will help you to manage diabetes. Again, a whole-food, plant-based diet is a proven way to prevent or treat type 2 diabetes or even put type 2 diabetes into remission. Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (pcrm.org) is an excellent resource.

Those with pre-diabetes should focus on achieving or maintaining a healthy weight, exercise and limiting processed foods while choosing high fiber fruits, veggies and whole grains. Here's a fun high fiber, high protein chili that just screams fall! <https://nutritionfacts.org/recipe/tempeh-and-mushroom-chili-with-corn-and-cilantro/>

For those with type 2 diabetes, the same things apply, but you can also check your blood sugars to see how foods affect your sugar. People with type 1 diabetes always use insulin and can still make those great food choices, but will match their insulin to the foods they eat. Many people with diabetes think they cannot eat carbohydrates (like fruits, grains, beans) but good quality carbs just need to be spread out throughout the day. If you need any help with this, please let me know and I'd be happy to help.

5. Walk to End Alzheimer's on September 27 at William Land Park I have done this walk a number of years in honor of my dad (sadly, I have to miss it this year). There is a lot of supportive information if you have a loved one with Alzheimer's. [Sacramento Alzheimer's Walk](#)

I want to do everything I can to reduce my risk of Alzheimer's, which is why I eat a plant-based diet (which includes plenty of berries), exercise, manage my stress, am careful about my sleep and practice brain games (all the things we talk about at CWP). For more information on reducing your risk, check out the brain docs: Dean and Ayesha Sherzai <https://thebraindocs.com/>. I also love their 'Your brain on....' Podcasts. If you need support for someone in your life with Alzheimer's, check out www.alz.org.

I encourage you to make your fall bucket list and enjoy this season!!!

Mushroom Bok Choy Soup

<https://www.brandnewvegan.com/recipes/vegan-mushroom-bok-choy-soup>

Recipe
Corner

Ingredients

- 1 medium onion, diced (*about 1 cup*)
- 1/2 lb shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 lb portobello mushrooms, destemmed & sliced
- 2 medium bok choy, cleaned and chopped
- 4 cups low sodium vegetable broth
- 2 Tbs low sodium soy sauce
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tbs white miso (*optional but recommended*)

Directions

1. Dice the onion and add it to a large soup pan over med-low heat. You can add a tablespoon of water or veg broth to prevent sticking.
2. While the onion is cooking, clean and destem the mushrooms and slice them into thin pieces. Add them to the pan and continue to simmer over med-low heat.
3. Add 2 tablespoons of low sodium soy sauce, occasionally stirring
4. Cut 1/2" to 1" off the end of each Bok Choy plant and rinse them thoroughly. Then slice the leaves into bite-sized pieces and add to the soup pan.
5. Add 4 cups (1 qt carton) low sodium vegetable broth and increase heat to high.
6. Once soup begins to boil, reduce heat to low and cover.
7. Simmer soup for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally
8. Season with salt, pepper, and 1 tablespoon of white miso before serving. Stir well to ensure the miso dissolves into the soup.
9. Garnish with toasted sesame seeds and chopped green onion if desired.

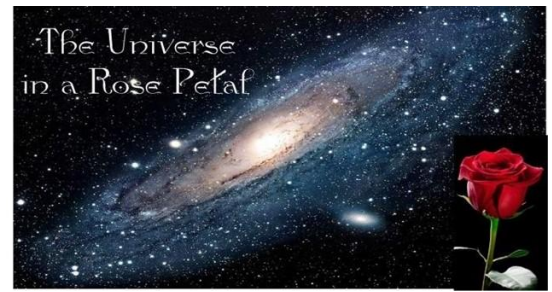


What else happens every fall? The American Diabetes Association recommends a flu vaccine every fall for everyone, but especially those with diabetes. People with diabetes tend to get sicker if they catch the flu than those without diabetes. Here is a listing of the other vaccines they suggest. <https://diabetes.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/SRI-ProtectYourselfwithVaccines-Patient-3-11-25.pdf>

Begin Again

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

September always makes me think of new beginnings. As a child in the 1960's I remember beginning a new school year in September. Now, every September, I think of the seasons changing and a new year beginning not too far in the distant future. During 2020, my husband and I would "start over" if irritations or moods were going south while isolating in our home: as a result we are not a statistic of the couples that broke up during those times! When we practice mindfulness and realize the attention or awareness has shifted away, we can begin again by returning it to our focus. Beginning again is a skill that strengthens with consistent practice.



One thing I appreciate about mindfulness practice is that there is no one right way to do it. Typically, the first foundation of mindfulness practice is awareness of the present moment in the body. There are many paths to choose from: breath, hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, touch, or following thoughts and emotions in awareness. I've shared in class Sharon Salzberg's quote: "when we realize that the mind has shifted away from our meditation focus, *that is a magic moment* when we can begin again, return to the focus, allowing ourselves the grace to begin again and again and again."

Beginning again by using acceptance, non-judgement and compassion helps to avoid getting caught up in stories and judgements we may have during mindfulness practice and to simply begin again with whatever our focus is, as often as is needed. Consistent practice leads to a skill that can help us anytime once we realize that we have strayed from our intention, values, or when something unexpected happens and we go off on a tangent. Once we notice – "that magic moment" when we recognize that the day is declining or a process is not headed towards our desired outcome - we can begin again. Beginning again allows us to look at our days with increased clarity and focus, connecting this powerful concept to the rest of life.

Here's a simple technique developed by the creator of the Relaxation Response, Herbert Benson MD, at Harvard Medical School. We practice this body scan at the beginning of every class; I encourage you to start with 10 minutes. Don't worry about how well you're doing or if you have thoughts come to mind, simply return to the focus.

- 1) Sit quietly in a comfortable position. 2) Close your eyes. 3) Deeply relax all of your muscles, beginning with your feet and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed as you move through the body. 4) Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word "one" (or some other focus word, sound or phrase rooted in your belief system) silently to yourself. For example, in... out... "one," in... out... "one," etc. when the time is up, sit quietly, then sit another minute with open eyes before rising.

"One of the really profound, liberating aspects of the practice of mindfulness is actually recognizing thoughts, and then realizing that they may be true to a degree, but then none of them are actually absolutely true and a lot of them are based on preferences and on selfing, a kind of "I like this, I don't like that. I want this. I don't want that." And when you bring awareness to it, then all of a sudden you see that those are like weather patterns in the sky of the mind."

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

For a more in depth Begin Again meditation:

<https://insighttimer.com/sharonsalzberg/guided-meditations/balance-and-beginning-again-meditation>

<https://insighttimer.com/josephgoldstein/guided-meditations/simply-begin-again>



Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*



September always brings Fall Awareness Week -- this year it is September 22-26. I am going to repeat parts of a prior article I had on this – same great websites, same great info, and you are really encouraged to check them out.

Check this website from the National Council on Aging to assess your own fall risk;

<https://www.ncoa.org/age-well-planner/assessment/falls-free-checkup>

The link to the [Sacramento StopFalls Coalition](#) can direct you to balance classes throughout our community. You can also join the balance class that is going on with CWP and PT students (Fridays, 2:30 pm). We have a Matter of Balance class starting September 26th, an 8-week course that will meet every Friday at 11 am until November 14th. Sign-up sheet in Folsom Hall.



Next page is another self-test you can try.

Many falls do not cause injuries. But one out of five falls does cause a serious injury, a broken bone or a head injury, making it hard for a person to get around, do everyday activities, or live on their own.

Fear of Falling. Many people who fall, even if they're not injured, become afraid of falling. This fear may cause a person to cut down on their everyday activities. When a person is less active, they become weaker and this further increases their chances of falling.

Risk Factors for Falling:

- Lower body weakness
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Difficulties with walking and balance
- Use of medicines, such as tranquilizers, sedatives, or antidepressants.
- Vision problems
- Foot pain or poor footwear
- Home hazards, like broken or uneven steps, and throw rugs or clutter that can be tripped over.

Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling.

Other websites that provide helpful information:

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/talk-to-your-doctor-6-tips-to-help-inform-your-conversation-about-falls>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/care-for-your-vision-and-hearing-5-ways-to-lower-falls-risk>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/talk-to-your-family-and-friends-5-ways-to-prevent-falls-together>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/review-medications-with-your-doctor-or-pharmacist-5-tips-for-falls-prevention-success>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/apple-watch-as-medical-alert-system-what-to-know/>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/how-to-prevent-falls-with-home-safety-modifications>

Fall Risk Prevention

Think about the physical activity you get very day. How much of it helps with your fall risk prevention?



Balance/Gait Training Activities	Yes	No
I can stand easily with feet close together.		
I can stand easily with feet close together in staggered position.		
I can stand easily with feet in an in-line position.		
I can stand easily on one foot at a time.		
I can stand easily on one foot with knee raised to parallel to floor		

Any no's? Perhaps balance/gait training needs to be a bigger priority in your program.

Dual Tasking/Eye-Hand Coordination Activities	Yes	No
I can walk & move my head from side to side easily.		
I can walk and carry something at the same time.		
I can toss a ball up & down while walking.		
I can move my right arm and left leg at the same time.		

Any no's? Perhaps dual task/coordination activities need to be a bigger priority in your program.



Strength Activities	Yes	No
I get out of chair easily.		
I do quad strengthening exercises regularly.		
I do heel lifts regularly.		
I do toe lifts regularly.		
I do leg lifting exercises focusing on hip abduction and adduction regularly.		

Any no's? Perhaps strength training specific to fall risk needs to be a bigger priority in your program



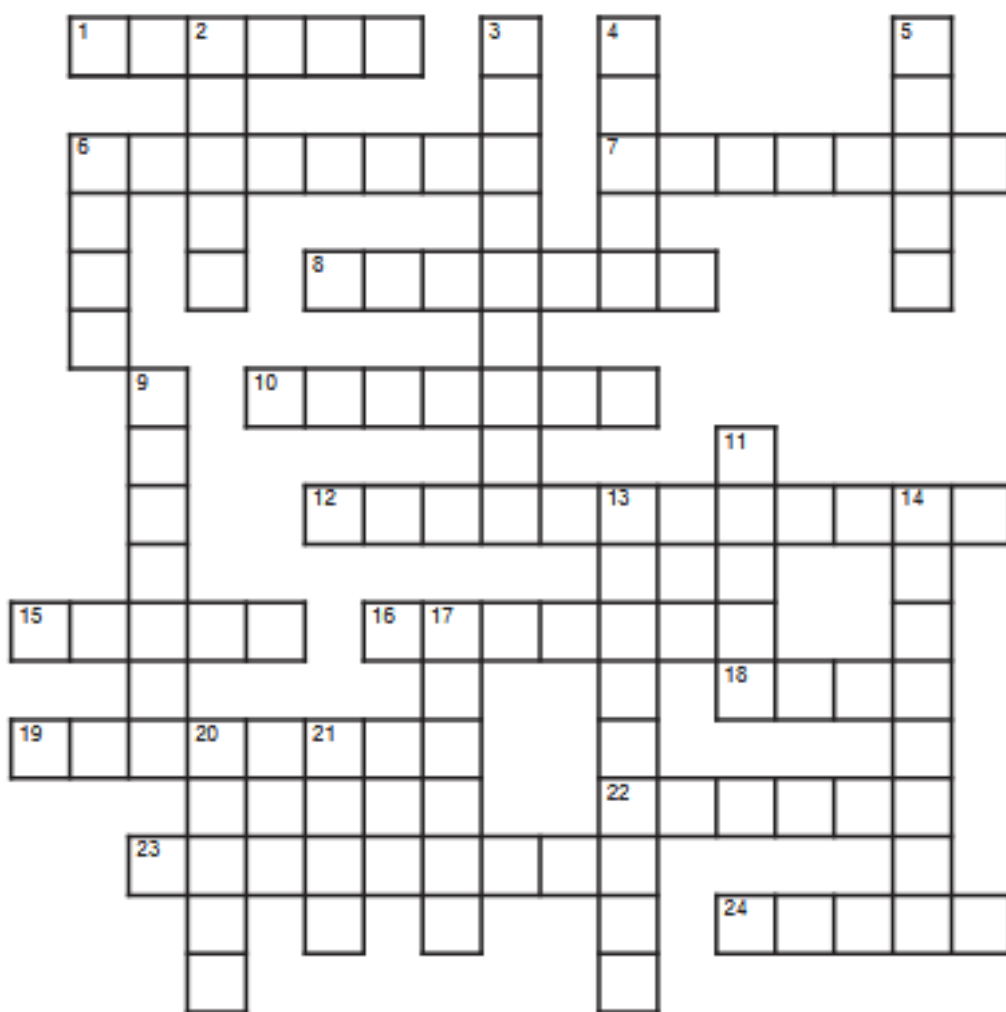
Flexibility Activities	Yes	No
When seated, I can bring my foot on top of the opposite knee easily		
When seated, I can reach forward, bending at the waist, easily.		
When seated, I can reach high overhead on each side easily.		
When seated, I can reach cross body forward & backwards easily.		
When seated, I can reach side to side easily.		

Any no's? Perhaps flexibility training specific to fall risk needs to be a bigger priority in your program



I LOVE FALL

Acorn
 Apple
 Autumn
 Chestnut
 Cider
 Cobweb
 Fall
 Football
 Gourd
 Halloween
 Harvest
 Hay Bale
 Hayride
 Leaves
 Maize
 November
 Nuts
 October
 Pumpkin
 Quilt
 Rake
 Scarecrow
 September
 Sleet
 Thanksgiving



ACROSS

1. They fall from trees.
6. Popular autumn sport.
7. Jack-o-lantern gourd.
8. The 10th month of the year.
10. The gathering of crops.
12. The fourth Thursday in November.
15. Might be patchwork.
16. Seat at a square dance (two words).
18. Leaf gathering yard tool.
19. They are roasted on an open fire.
22. Halloween decoration made by a spider.
23. The 9th month of the year.
24. Decorative squash.

DOWN

2. Oak tree's fruit.
3. October 31st.
4. Honeycrisp.
5. Also known as corn.
6. The season that follows summer.
9. Fun activity on a farm.
11. Drink made from apples.
13. Used to keep birds off of crops.
14. The 11th month of the year.
17. Another word for the fall season.
20. Semi-frozen rain.
21. What squirrels often gather.

