

An Apple is a Rose?

In the early 1900s, botanists reclassified the Spirea, Plum, and Apple families as subfamilies within the Rose family. This new categorization was embodied in Robert Frost's poem from 1927:

The Rose Family

by Robert Frost

*The rose is a rose,
And was always a rose.
But the theory now goes
That the apple's a rose,
And the pear is, and so's
The plum, I suppose.
The dear only knows
what will next prove a rose.
You, of course, are a rose —
But were always a rose.*

In the past, botanists classified plants using plant morphology or the study of appearances and visual characteristics, such as how many leaves or petals a plant has. Today, botanists also use DNA to identify plant relationships. This has and surely will lead to more reclassifications.

Rose Family Album

The Rose family is called **Rosaceae**. It includes several important crops such as:

- apples
- pears
- cherries
- peaches
- strawberries

Are roses edible?

While not as delicious as pears or cherries, some **rose hips** (the seed pods of roses) and **rose petals** are edible. Only roses grown without insecticides or fungicides can be eaten.

If spent flowers are left on a rose bush at the end of the growing season, rose hips will develop. These vary in size and flavor and must be processed to remove seeds and fine hairs. Rose hips are an **excellent source of vitamin C** and are often used to make herbal tea, jam, and jelly. They also provide **food for birds**.

