



Terraces with apple trees in remote India



Probably one of the most remarkable things that I have recently seen was a series of apple trees cultivated on mountain slopes in a remote area in India, close to the Himalayas. I visited a large valley called Himachal Pradesh, near the city of Shimla, at an altitude of about 1,700 meters. I had never seen apples cultivated that way. The reddish plantations, with the Himalayan mountains in the background gave color to a unique landscape. I asked myself what kind of apples could grow there, as I took photos of the grove that stretched upward to the snowy horizon. The chosen variety in these geographical conditions, I thought, was key to being able to compete in the market. As we know, apples are the second most traded fruit on the planet, and its producers are under constant pressure to improve productivity and quality. My question was answered when I saw the orchards up close. Local farmers are dedicated mainly to the Golden, Red Delicious and Irish Peach varieties, which is a good choice. However, I was told that they needed to improve the fruit's size and color. We checked the numbers and saw that it could be achieved. We adjusted the nitrogen and potassium ratio, and changed the timing of fertilizer application from the post-harvest period to the vegetative development period in order to influence growth. I advised the producers on pruning management, which meant reducing a part of the foliage around the fruit so the apples could receive more light. This intensifies their color, for both red or golden. There is nothing like a very red Red Delicious or a very golden Golden! Either in Chile, Poland or India, the color of an apple is its best introduction.