There’s no denying the technology sector is abundant with fruitful projects.

What is it with the computer industry and fruit? After all, your archetypal IT person has a much closer relationship with pizza and coke than pears and kumquats. But computer companies insist on naming themselves and their computers after fruit. Raspberry Pi is just the latest, and its name echoes some of the early home microcomputers that inspired a generation of coders and, in some cases, engineers.

Along with the Sinclair’s ZX machines, the most notable of these were machines from Acorn Computers (yes, acorn is a fruit, we checked), such as the Electron and the BBC Micro. Back in the day, British company Apricot produced desktop computers like the Apricot PC and the Apricot Xi that competed with IBM’s and Apple Macs.

But these most famous examples are just the top of the fruit bowl. Cherry Corporation makes peripherals, while the Plum keyboard is a long way from the original Qwerty typewriter we examine in this month’s Classic Projects (p100).

Clementine is a data mining software tool by SPSS Inc; Mandarin Software was a producer of educational material such as the Fun School series; Mango (Multi-Image) is a Japanese entertainment company founded in 1979. Which brings us right back to where we started.

Raspberry Pi’s name is inspired by the early British classics of computing but will it follow in their footsteps? The idea is not to somehow turn back the clock but can it enthuise a generation of future software developers or computer scientists in the same way? Or, with its ability to interface to control boards and other peripherals that actually do something physical, can it go further and inspire a new generation of much needed engineers?

The Pi has spawned a lot of creative projects, as well as some serious industrial applications, as Chris Edwards discovers on p38. With a million units shifted, surely the Pi will bear fruit of its own.

What do you think?