



Cherries

Interesting Facts

Excess rain can cause cherries to split. Rain covers can protect the fruit from this, but they can cost \$44,000 to \$50,000 per hectare.

What are cherries?

Cherries are a small, round, dark red stone fruit. They grow on trees in small clusters. Both sweet cherries and sour cherries are grown in BC. Sweet cherries are round or slightly heart-shaped.

Where are cherries produced in BC?

Cherries are grown in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Kootenay Valleys. They are sensitive to winter and spring frosts.

How many cherries do we produce?

BC produces 16.6 million kilograms of sweet cherries and 0.5 million kilograms of sour cherries annually. This is more 70% of the Canadian cherry crop. The main varieties grown in BC are Bing, Lambert, Van, Lapins and Sweetheart. Lapins and Sweetheart are late varieties that are receiving high returns in eastern and offshore markets.

How are cherries produced?

Once planted, a cherry orchard takes 10 to 15 years to reach full production, however, producers are experimenting with higher density plantings. Once cherry trees are established, the orchardist must regularly prune, fertilize, control weed growth, insects and disease, water and replant trees to ensure the orchard is always healthy.

Beehives are placed in orchards after the first blooms open, to ensure pollination.

Cherries are harvested during the summer, mainly late June through July. Cherries are easily damaged; harvesters must handle them carefully while picking and when moving them from bucket to bin. Bruised fruit will not keep long, even in proper storage conditions. Fruit must be cooled immediately after being picked to avoid moisture loss. Shrivelled fruit is not attractive to buyers.

How are cherries used?

Cherries are eaten fresh or made into pie filling, flavoured yogurt, jellies, jams, sauces, stewed fruit, fruit

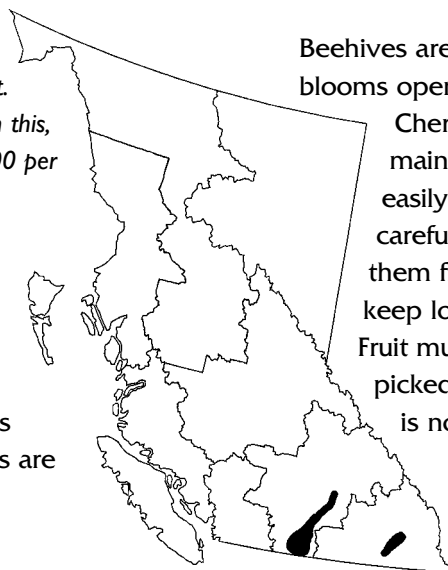
drinks, ice cream and candies. Cherries are a good source of vitamin C, the B vitamins, potassium and many micronutrients. Most sweet cherries are eaten fresh. Almost all sour cherries are processed.

What happens after the cherries leave the farm?

After cherries are picked, they are put into bins and moved from the orchard. Cherries are taken to packinghouses where they are cooled before being packaged and shipped to buyers. Cherries are best kept at -1°C to 1°C throughout these operations to retain maximum quality. Cherries should be shipped to market 24 to 48 hours after harvest.

What challenges do cherry producers face?

Little cherry disease is a serious threat to the cherry industry in the Okanagan-Similkameen and Kootenay Valleys. This disease is spread by the apple mealy bug. Japanese flowering cherries,



a common ornamental tree grown in many gardens, can carry this disease without showing any signs of it. To protect cherry orchards, it is illegal to grow these flowering cherry trees in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys. Two other pests of concern are cherry fruit flies and cherry fruit worms. If not controlled, they will make the cherries unmarketable.

Researchers are developing dwarf rootstocks. These smaller trees can be planted closer together, thereby increasing total production per hectare. Because the trees are smaller, labour costs for pruning and harvesting are reduced and smaller spray volumes are required due to less total leaf area.

Bird damage is another problem for producers, especially on young trees. Protecting crops is

becoming more difficult, and the problem is growing. With increasing urban/rural interface, producers are looking for new ways to protect their crops, as opposed to the traditional methods, i.e., using guns or spraying.

Who's involved in producing cherries?

- Orchard owners
- Cherry pickers
- Sorters and packers
- Transporters/truck drivers
- Fruit processors

Contacts and other resources:

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
BC Fruits Growers' Association

Nutritional Facts

Serving Size: 1 cup, 21 cherries (140g)

Calories	90
Total Fat	0.5g
Saturated Fat	0g
Cholesterol	0mg
Sodium	0mg
Total Carbohydrate	22g
Dietary Fibre	3g
Sugars	19g
Protein	2g
Vitamin A	2%

Vitamin C	15%
Iron	2%
Calcium	2%
Calories from Fat	0
Daily Value*	
Total Fat	1%
Saturated Fat	0%
Cholesterol	0%
Sodium	0%
Total Carbohydrate	7%
Dietary Fibre	12%

*Per cent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

