



Cranberries

Interesting Facts

BC grows about 29% of the cranberries grown in Canada. BC is the world's third largest producer of cranberries, after Massachusetts and Wisconsin.

What are cranberries?

A cranberry is a berry that is round and bright red when ripe. It is 0.3 to 2.5cm in diameter. Cranberries grow on low lying vines.

Where are cranberries produced in BC?

Cranberries were first grown on the Queen Charlotte Islands in the 1920s. Now, almost all of the cranberry bogs are in the Lower Fraser Valley, Richmond, Pitt Meadows and Fort Langley. There are also a few bogs on Vancouver Island.

How many cranberries do we produce?

Almost all (70%) of BC's cranberries are grown for the processing market. The rest are sold as fresh berries. Cranberries are BC's largest berry crop—by both volume and value. BC produces about 37 million kilograms of cranberries, valued at \$49 million. These berries are grown by 91 family farm operations on 2,638 producing hectares.

How are cranberries produced?

Cranberry growth and survival depends on a rare and fragile combination of soils and geology, the right climate and a dedicated grower. Cranberries are grown in bogs that are a mixture of sand and peat soil. These bogs must have an ample water supply for irrigation and for harvest flooding.

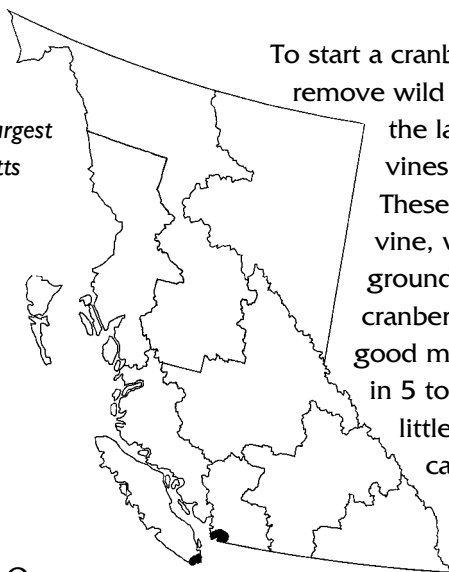
To start a cranberry bog, growers must first remove wild growth from the bog, then level the land, and plant vines. Cranberry vines are started from vine cuttings. These are 10 to 25cm long pieces of vine, which are placed directly into the ground. It takes 2 to 3 years before a cranberry vine will bear fruit, and with good management it will be full-bearing in 5 to 6 years. Cranberries require very little pruning. Fertilization is done carefully to promote the growth of berry production while minimizing vine growth. For crop pollination, a high level of bee activity is important. Hives are placed in the crop when 10 to 20% of the plants are in bloom. It is important not to spray the crop at this time, as insecticides can harm honeybees.

Cranberries grow in clusters on the vine. When it is time to harvest the cranberries, most growers flood the fields. A beater is run over vines to shake berries loose. The berries, which float, have a soft landing in the water. The berries are corralled with wooden or inflatable booms. They are then pumped onto trucks. Floodwater is recycled by cranberry growers, passing from grower to grower through canals, flume gates and holding ponds.

Berries that are to be used in the fresh market are harvested dry. A mechanical harvester "combs" berries off the vines.

How are cranberries used?

Cranberries are used in cranberry sauce, cranberry juice and cranberry jelly. They are used in baking, in products such as cranberry muffins or bread. Cranberries are an excellent source of vitamin C.



One glass of cranberry juice cocktail supplies the total daily requirement of vitamin C. Cranberries are a perennial crop. It is not unusual to find a 75 to 100-year-old bog in production.

What happens after the cranberries leave the farm?

Cranberries are a regulated crop in BC. Cranberry growers sell their berries either to Lucerne or Ocean Spray. Lucerne deals with the 4 to 5 growers that are not affiliated with Ocean Spray. Ocean Spray is a farmer-owned co-operative, located throughout cranberry-growing areas in Canada and the United States. In BC, Ocean Spray has a receiving station where berries are cleaned. From there they are sent to freezers in the United States to await processing. Ocean Spray, a Massachusetts-based company, markets nearly all of the cranberries grown in North America.

What challenges do cranberry producers face?

One challenge that growers face is frost damage to vines. Frost in bogs can occur as late as June. A producer can lose up to 50% of a crop in as little as two hours. To protect their crops, growers spray the vines with water when the temperature nears

freezing. The ice protects the plants from frost damage. Computerized heat sensors can be used to inform farmers when the temperature nears freezing.

A second challenge is ensuring pollination of the flowers. Cranberry flowers produce little nectar so bee colonies must be placed on the edge of cranberry bogs to ensure pollination. There has been a recent reduction in the availability of bees, as a result of significant colony losses from mites, a new and deadly pest of honeybees.

Who's involved in producing cranberries?

- Owners
- Field workers for maintenance and harvest
- Apiarists to supply the bees
- Extension workers
- Marketing/promotion people
- Pest management services
- Pesticide and fertilizer salespeople
- Truckers/transporters
- Researchers

Contacts and other resources:

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
BC Cranberry Growers' Association
BC Cranberry Marketing Commission



Nutritional Facts

Serving Size: 1/2 cup chopped

Calories	30
Total Fat	0g
Saturated Fat	0g
Cholesterol	0mg
Sodium	.5mg
Total Carbohydrate	6.5g
Dietary Fibre	2.5g
Sugars	-g
Protein	.25g
Vitamin A	-%
Vitamin C	10%
Iron	-%
Calcium	4mg

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