



Production & Uses:

- The sweet cherry, *Prunus Avium* is a member of the Rosaceae (rose) family.
- There are over 1,000 varieties of cherry, but fewer than 10 % are produced commercially.
- The major diseases of cherries (the fruit) are Brown Rot, Botrytis Fruit Rot, Bacterial Canker, Powdery Mildew, Cytospora Canker, Coryneum Blight and Alternaria Fruit Rot.
- Severe winter temperatures can cause cold injury to shoots, fruit spurs, trunks and even roots. Winter damage to cherry trees increases the susceptibility to diseases and insects, particularly Shothole Borer and Ambrosia beetle.
- Periods of heavy rain can cause rain split, which occurs when cherry fruit absorbs water and swells, eventually splitting. Over 50% loss can be experienced on sensitive cultivars. The wound caused by splitting, serves as a point of entry for diseases, particularly Brown Rot and Botrytis. Trees can be sprayed with calcium to reduce damage. Some growers use helicopters or “AirBlast” sprayers to dry off the fruit.
- Sweet cherries have been produced in Canada for many years. Due to spring frosts and untimely rain sensitivity, sweet cherries can only be grown commercially in a few locations in Canada.
 - Production in British Columbia (~ 75% of the Canadian crop) began around the 1930s and is centred in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Creston valleys.
 - Approx. 75% of Ontario’s (~ 24% of the Canadian crop) production is located in the Niagara/Hamilton-Wentworth areas.
 - The remaining 1% is grown on small acreages in Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Quebec.
 - Nova Scotia, for example, has been producing since the 1950’s when there was commercial production in the Bear River area of Annapolis County and where there is still an annual cherry festival.
 - Canada is a relatively small producer of sweet cherries. The largest are the U.S. and Eastern Europe.
- On average, Canadians consume less than 1 lbs. / person.
 - The vast majority of cherries are used fresh. Cherries are also blended for sauces or drinks, frozen, canned and used for jams, pie fillings and yogurt flavouring.
 - The flavor of the cherry ranks among top flavor favorites in the world.
 - It takes about 50 cherries to make a cherry pie.
- Cherries do not ripen after harvest.
- The bark & stems of wild cherries has an odour of almonds.



History / Culture

- Cherry seeds have been found in The Bronze Age and Roman archaeological sites throughout Europe.
- In Japan, the cherry symbolizes the brevity of life.
 - The saying goes “The cherry is among flowers as the Samurai is among men”.
- Ripe cherries off the tree mean success and happiness.
- Hot cherry stones were used in bed pans to warm beds.
- A cherry tree is an omen of good fortune.

Medicinal Properties

- Cherries are low in fat, sodium, cholesterol and are a source of fiber, Vitamin A, B, C and E and Potassium.
- Cherries help reduce the pain of arthritis, muscle and back pain and fight inflammation in joints.
- Consuming 280 grams (10 ounces) of cherries increases antioxidant blood levels.
 - Considered important in the diet, Antioxidants intercept free radicals and protect cells from oxidative damage that may lead to disease.
- Cherries can reduce Urate levels in the blood, thus helping to eliminate gout pain.
 - Urate: A salt derived from uric acid. When the body cannot metabolize uric acid properly, urates can build up in body tissues or crystallize within the joints causing severe pain.
- By helping reduce inflammation in the body, the anthocyanin and bioflavonoids found in cherries may help eliminate migraine headaches. These compounds are known to have similar activity to aspirin and ibuprofen.
- An excellent source of Melatonin, cherries help with insomnia.
- Cancer Fighting Properties
 - Queritrin - a flavonoid, is rich in cherries, and has been found by researchers to be one of the most potent anticancer agents. When eating cherries, the Queritrin is set free to fight off all the body’s cancerous cells.
 - Cherries also contain Ellagic acid, a naturally occurring plant phenolic known as an anti-carcinogenic/anti-mutagenic compound. Some researchers say that Ellagic acid may be the most effective way to prevent cancer.
 - Another compound found in cherries - Perillyl alcohol (POH), is extremely powerful in reducing the occurrence of all types of cancer. Researchers found that POH stops the growth of cancer cells by depriving them of the proteins they need to grow. It has worked on every kind of cancer that POH has been tested against.