

---

**- Advertisement -**

## **Rainier nears attractive blueberry goal**

June 1, 2020

As summer approaches and the upcoming Washington blueberry season nears first pick, Rainier Fruit Co.'s 100 percent organic blueberry operation is on track to earn the title of Bee Better Certified in July of 2020. "Rainier Fruit has been family owned and operated for five generations and it goes without saying that we would like to last another five," said Mark Zirkle, president of Zirkle Fruit Co. "The need to sustain our fields and pollinators is crucial to that goal, which makes involvement in programs like Bee Better Certified a natural choice, as well as an exciting one."

In collaboration with the Xerces Society, the 100 percent family-owned-and-operated blueberry grower planted nearly 150 acres of wildflowers amongst multiple ranches over the last three years in an effort to help attract, protect, and sustain native pollinators in their fields. "It's pretty simple; if we don't protect the bees, we don't have fruit to sell," said Tyler Johnson, Rainier Fruit's blueberry commodity manager. "The Bee Better Certified seal also gives today's source-conscious shoppers confidence that their purchasing decisions are benefiting pollinators and conservation-minded companies."

The Xerces' program involves habitat creation to protect wild pollinators. "By building new habitats and limiting threats, such as pesticides, the team at Rainier Fruit is creating resilient farming systems that benefit pollinators and many other beneficial insects they rely on," said Cameron Newell, Bee

---

Better Certified program coordinator. “We are proud of the habitat work that Rainier has done across many of their ranches and we are excited to see them embrace Bee Better Certified.”

“This certification will not only cover our blueberries but also expand to include other crops in our portfolio as well,” Johnson said as he mentions Rainier’s year-round organic apple program and upcoming cherry season. “We’re looking forward to another exciting and innovating blueberry season as we work toward multiple certifications, integrate new genetics into our program, and take our 2020 organic blueberry crop from June through September for another season.”

*(Tyler Johnson, is Rainier Fruit’s blueberry commodity manager)*

[Print](#)