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**Hood River's high-elevation cherries worth the extra effort**

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By

Kyle Eberth, Northwest editor

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[Hood River Cherry Co.](#)'s high-elevation cherries are worth the extra effort that comes with growing at elevation. "The cherries just taste better," said Brad Fowler, co-owner at Hood River Cherry Co., headquartered in Hood River, OR. "But growing cherries this way is not for the faint of heart!"

Growing cherries can be a precarious business, growing at a high elevation adds layers of complexity and risk to that challenge. "Winters are colder and often kill or injure trees, spring frost can be severe, the growing season is shorter and it takes longer to grow a tree — just to name a few of the challenges," said Fowler.

So why not grow under easier conditions, where volume output is notably greater and processes are simplified? HRCC gets this question a lot, and its response, albeit simple and straightforward, comes from a deep desire to produce excellence. "Cherries just taste better the farther north they grow and the farther up the mountains they are," said Fowler.

At high elevation, HRCC's orchards experience cooler nights, allowing the fruit to develop at a slower and consistent pace. The results are noteworthy, increased sugar levels, crisp texture, and an enhanced, delightful flavor profile. "When customers bite into a high-elevation cherry that has been tree-ripened, the fruit is nearly black — many customers didn't know a cherry could be like this," said Fowler.

Another benefit to HRCC's high-elevation operation is the longer season. Fowler said, "since they are the very last cherries to ripen in North America, they are available all the month of July until at least the end of August," — retailers will know that availability is rare within the industry.

"It is really no secret, cherries just get better and better as the season goes on," said Fowler. "When it comes to cherries, Mother Nature saves the best for last."

[Kyle Eberth](#)

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## About Kyle Eberth |

Kyle Eberth is new to the produce industry, but has grown up around it, in proclaimed "Apple Capitol of the World," Wenatchee, WA. For the past 14-years he has worked in the non-profit sector with an emphasis on brand storytelling, community engagement, and donor relationships.

Kyle graduated from Whitworth University (Spokane, WA) in 2007. He and wife Kelsey were married shortly thereafter, when they moved to Wenatchee to launch their careers. Kyle is "Dad" to Brooklyn and Hudson, together the Eberths enjoy skiing, biking, their family and friends, and playing together in the beautiful place they get to live.

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