



- Advertisement -

Rainier Fruit see big opportunity with Northwest cherries

By

Kyle Eberth

June 5, 2023

[Rainier Fruit Co.](#) is gearing up for what's expected to be a stellar Northwest cherry season. And while start dates will shift later than typical years, due to the near record cold spring, Rainier is looking forward to a crop with great potential for size, quality, and promotability. Tyler Johnson, sale manager at Rainier, said, "We're anticipating peak volumes timing from mid- to late-July through early August for dark sweets, and early- to mid-July for light sweets."



The grower-shipper expects to see a larger crop than what the industry had to offer in 2022. Johnson said, "This year should provide the opportunity for retailers to generate dollars in the category, and offer great product to customers throughout the season." Along with that, Johnson added, "a wider range of sizing will create room for more of the 'value seeking' customers at attractive price points." Due to the smaller crop and lighter fruit load on trees last year, Rainier explained that the fruit was not only scarce but larger, and those factors compounded to drive pricing upwards for most of the Washington shipping window.

The last few seasons have reminded us that Mother Nature is in charge, which is why Rainier's orchard and warehouse teams employ numerous techniques to reduce the impact of weather events. Johnson said, "Diverse orchard location, protective netting, and in-field hydrocoolers are a few examples of investments we've made to hedge our bets and maximize quality." And while it's not the easy way, over the last 20 years Rainier has learned it's worth the effort.

“While we can’t control the weather, we can control our growing practices,” said Johnson. Rainier has utilized integrated pest management for quite a while now, but more recently introduced new techniques such as plant sap analysis to build proactive programs that focus on holistic plant health to increase yield and quality versus relying completely on conventional practices. “We’re also continuing to plant more pollinator habitat in partnership with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation to bolster native populations year-round in and around our orchards.”

[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.

[Print](#)