Washington Anticipates Sweetest Season to Date For Stone Fruit

Washington State Fruit Commission

YAKIMA, Wash. — Stone fruit from Washington state, including juicy peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums and prunes are now available on store shelves nationwide while the season lasts, approximately through mid-September. Thanks to the early summer weather in Washington, stone fruit farmers are anticipating a slightly larger crop with some of the sweetest, juiciest fruits yet. The outstanding quality of another popular stone fruit grown in the region, sweet cherries, has already been helping growers sell the quickest and second-largest cherry crop on record.

Stone fruit from Washington orchards are prized for their sweetness and flavor balance due to the region's unique microclimates and ancient volcanic soils that make for ideal growing conditions. The 2014 crop is expected to be one of the best to date, as the lengthening days of early summer weather stayed within the perfect temperature ranges for growth. As with wine grapes, these long warm days followed by cooler nights typically leads to more distinctly flavorful and juicy fruit.

"When stone fruit hangs for a long period of time on the branch, it allows the fruit to build up its natural sugar content which makes them that much tastier," said James Michael, the vice president of marketing - North America for the Washington State Fruit Commission. "We expect it to be a banner year with an exceptionally flavorful crop!"

In addition to their delicious taste, peaches in particular are also grabbing the spotlight for their noted health benefits. A recent study by researchers at Washington State University (then at Texas A&M) and published in The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry [1], shows that the compounds found in peaches could supplement therapies that reduce the risk of metastasis in breast and other types of cancer. The study shows compounds in peaches may inhibit growth of cancer cells and their ability to spread.

While the Washington stone fruit season only lasts a few short weeks, consumers can enjoy the taste and health benefits year round through canning and preserving. The website sweetpreservation.com [2], created by the Washington State Fruit Commission, is a go-to resource for canning and freezing fruit, including everything from how-to tips, traditional and modern canning recipes, craft ideas and downloadable jar labels to customize at home.

For more information on Washington state stone fruit, seasonal recipes, health information and more, visit www.wastatefruit.com [3].

About Northwest Cherries and Washington State Fruit Commission

Washington State Fruit Commission is a growers' organization funded by fruit assessments to increase awareness and consumption of regional stone fruits. The organization is dedicated to the promotion, education, market development, and research of soft fruits from Northwest orchards. It began in 1947 and has since grown to include five states – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Montana. For more information, visit www.nwcherries.com *[4] or* www.wastatefruit.com *[5].*

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[3] http://cp.mcafee.com/d/FZsSd38s81NJ5yUV5VdV6VKVJ6XbVEVpjvohdETpvd7barXPVJ6X8VdVUQsFzzqdS3hOqen6kS3hOraX6nil8v4y2JgcX2uAvlZ2mYKrR0PI9WhZnQ9rOVlQsE3LtgpvW_cEIcK6zC_nKnjhKZP3zX3PwXBHFShjlKqekul3PWApmU6CSjrxK_8I9LfzAm4PhOrKr016dFfp-X5Kk-nMSITgCaQ-9ClLE2BEMYNgNafYKruKUedwbJ2sE4pRwq81yuPYQg34WMYQg2YmVjd40N-QH0Qgj9-q81wN_P-APh01_Crvjd-AdlwWbu
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[5] http://cp.mcafee.com/d/1jWVIg6xAq43qb5NObOrOdPtPqdSnPhOOC-MyrhKO-qemkTTDPqdShOrPNEVj76QrI6zAQsKcFI6zASlScKAGg-945qwpS4Z8-HW4JVsTG1DojQzWLEiTBPpEVg7uWwO_R-phopsd7d-LsKCztXC77S7D1TbnjIyCHsQsEYG7DR8OJMddLCT3t-hojuv78I9CzATsS02criuPZSbsFYLxJpKxclFYjcHvg5bhxVyxykvVsSZtMsr0nq4Vg8PH0Qg34ZDVEw69RxVEw5UJOCq81zZFm1EwCjYQg31z_DZ9Cy03_cS-CrlLu1