



July 26th, 2012

This week's "Awesomely Delicious" box is a summer delight featuring fresh organic Bing cherries with other grab and go summer treats. We know you're busy trying to balance work, summer fun and hot humid days. Keep these fruits cool, pack a summer picnic and head for a shady park or splash in a lake.

Enjoy,

Everett Myers, Founder and President of FruitShare™

Storage and Ripening

Keep your cherries, blueberries and grapes in the coldest part of your refrigerator. They will stay freshest when stored as cold as 34 degrees F. Only wash your fruit right before you eat them to help discourage mold. Place a paper towel in the bag with the cherries to soak up any condensation that may occur. This will help keep your cherries should stay fresh, sweet and delicious for 10-14 days. The pluots should also be kept in the refrigerator to keep crisp and juicy. You can place your Arctic Jay white nectarines on the counter to soften to thumb pressure to enjoy when most juicy or place them directly in your refrigerator if you like crunchy nectarines.

What It Takes

Apple and George have been growing cherries organically for over 30 years, and they believe firmly in the benefits of organic agriculture. When they bought their current orchard in 1997, the crops were already planted and pesticides were present. Over the next few years, Apple and George slowly transitioned the land back to its natural, organic state, enduring tough harvests and learning loads. Now, George enjoys the simple pleasure of watching folks eat the cherries he and his wife grew on their central-Washington farm. Apple, the self-professed philosophical spouse, loves being part of a bigger movement and of course providing some of the healthiest, tastiest food grown today. Since transitioning their orchard to organic, Apple and George have harvested some of our favorite fruit of the summer year after year. They employ about 40 seasonal workers, who work in an environment free of harsh chemicals alongside Apple and George, their three grown children, plus their significant others. The orchard is only 3.5 acres large, but the small size allows for plenty of care. The cherries are hand-selected, so you know that the cherries in your box are truly at their peak of ripeness. Sometimes Apple, George and their team of harvesters sweep through the orchard on four separate occasions!

Strange as it may sound, you have birds to thank for the beautiful blueberries in your box this week. Specifically, you can thank Jim Lott's falcons. In a unique and innovative "bird abatement program," Jim has bred and trained falcons to scare away birds that would otherwise help themselves to his blueberries in Burbank, WA. Falconers bring the birds of prey out to the fields to patrol the skies and protect the crop, chasing away starlings, robins and finches. It is a project that takes a lot of time and dedication, what with the extensive training that each bird requires from birth. But Jim says it is worth it. Not only is he passionate about the bird abatement program, it is cost-effective, especially for high-value fruit crops. Jim's birds have been leased out to other blueberry farmers, and have also been used to keep cherries safe from hungry birds. He says there has been a lot of interest from other orchards, and he has hopes that the bird abatement program could take off on its own and extend from blueberries and cherries to grapes - and beyond. We're thankful for Jim's creative hobby and these blueberries that have wonderful flavor and are protected by watchful eyes from above.

Ignacio “Nacho” Sanchez and his wife, Casamira, provided the Dapple Fire pluots and Mariposa plums in your box. For Nacho and Casamira, farming started as a hobby in 1989 when they bought their first 6-acre orchard in Cutler, California. But over the next four years, Nacho’s orchard expanded rapidly, and he made his passion for farming into his full-time job. When their twin girls were born in 1991, Nacho and Casamira named their orchard Twin Girls Farms; and when their third daughter arrived, Nacho named some varieties of peaches after her. Having converted to organic farming practices in 1999, Nacho uses beneficial insects and cover crops in place of conventional chemicals. He gets great satisfaction from the knowledge that no harmful chemicals can affect his family, his workers, or his customers.

The Flame grapes in your box this week are from the Benzler family in Fresno, CA. The family affair began in 1952 when Fred and Bertha began a farm with the ideals growing of ecological and natural food products. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Benzlers began converting to organic growing practices, and they haven’t looked back since. They pick their grapes and ship them within a matter of hours so that the freshest, most flavorful grapes arrive to you!

The Arctic Jay nectarines are our favorite white nectarine coming from a fantastic grower. Mike picks and packs everything in the field to have less handling, thereby allowing the fruit to take in as much sugar as possible. White stone fruit is low acid and therefore much sweeter than most yellow fruit. Enjoy these fresh or try halving them and grilling them for a fun twist of flavor.

Health and Wellness

With the heat still blazing across most of the U.S., we wanted to take a moment to remind you how important it is to stay hydrated! When you feel thirsty, your body is already dehydrated. Keep a bottle of cold water within reach and sip on it throughout the day, even if you are indoors. It’s very important to give your body plenty of water so you can remain healthy through this heat! Also, remember that fruit carries lots of water, too. Eating fresh fruit as part of your meals and snacks can help replenish your body’s stores of water and nutrients. Stay cool!

Recipe

Cherry-Berry-Tea Smoothie

3/4 cup water

2 Rooibos tea bags

6 ounces silken tofu

10 ounces (2 cups) frozen sweet cherries (tip - pit cherries before freezing)

6 ounces (1 cup) frozen grapes

3 ounces (1/2 cup) frozen blueberries

Bring water to a simmer. Immediately remove from heat, and add tea bags. Let steep, uncovered, for 8 minutes. Discard tea bags. Refrigerate tea until cold, about 40 minutes. Puree tea, tofu, and fruit in a blender until smooth, and serve cold for a filling breakfast or mid-day snack.

Courtesy of wholeliving.com

Got a favorite recipe or comment you want to share? Become a fan on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FruitShare) (www.facebook.com/FruitShare), follow us on [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/FruitShare) (www.twitter.com/FruitShare), and check out our [Tumblr](http://www.FruitShare.tumblr.com) (www.FruitShare.tumblr.com) and [WordPress](http://FruitShare.wordpress.com) (FruitShare.wordpress.com) pages. Good old-fashioned email works, too, at comments@FruitShare.com.