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## Trending Now: Flavor

Consumers seek out foods that provide an enjoyable taste experience and provide health and functional benefits – flavor infused dried fruits fall right in line. In the U.S., flavorings that check all the boxes include elderflower, ginger, ginseng, lavender, and turmeric, to name a few.

Innova Market Insights released its top flavor trends for 2021, and we want to explore the top five:

- 1. Flavor Mashups** – Flavoring food to broaden the dimensions of indulgence, think sweet and savory combinations, hmm... chili flavored tart cherries? According to the 2020 Innova Flavor Survey, one in three consumers globally agreed that interesting/exotic combinations influenced their flavor choices in food and beverages.
- 2. Modern Nostalgia** – Putting a modern twist on familiar products. One in two consumers globally says they put more trust into a new brand if it collaborates with one they already know (Innova Consumer Survey 2020). Consumers gravitate toward comforting and familiar food and beverages, seasonal tastes, caramel, cheddar, pumpkin pie.
- 3. In Tune with Immune** – Immunity boosting ingredients continue to be a key focus for 2021. One in three consumers globally says that they would choose orchard flavors (I think we know a few!) when boosting their immunity.
- 4. New Omnichannel Eating** – Thirty-one percent of consumers globally say that they get flavor inspiration from restaurants, cafes, etc. Consumers can now access many of these specialty flavors that were previously only accessible via foodservice.
- 5. Citrus Flavors Reign** – The top reason consumers choose citrus flavors is for refreshment (44%), but immunity boosting is close behind at 40%. I think this one calls for an **infused dried cultivated blueberry with lemon flavoring** – yum!

Want more info!? Taste and nutrition company Kerry recently released new reports that look at how taste trends are evolving around the world. Click [HERE](#) to access and download.



## Grower Spotlight: Riverside Cranberry Co.

Started by Ken Rutlin and now into their third (and maybe fourth) generation of growers, Kurt Rutlin with his children Julie and Kyle and granddaughter Kloe, grow cranberries in marshes covering a "country block."

The Rutlins are stewards of the land, working to leave it in better condition for future generations. This means working to minimize the impact on sensitive wetlands. Bumblebees used for pollinating, are turned out to natural pastures to pollinate wildflowers and fields. Integrated pest management and automated irrigation systems help produce the best cranberries in an ethical manner.

We are proud to call Riverside Cranberry Co. one of our growers and are thankful for their environmentally friendly growing efforts!

## Salty Snacking

According to a recent article in **Food Processing magazine**, salty snacking is on the rise, and studies find that salty snacks are coming out on top.

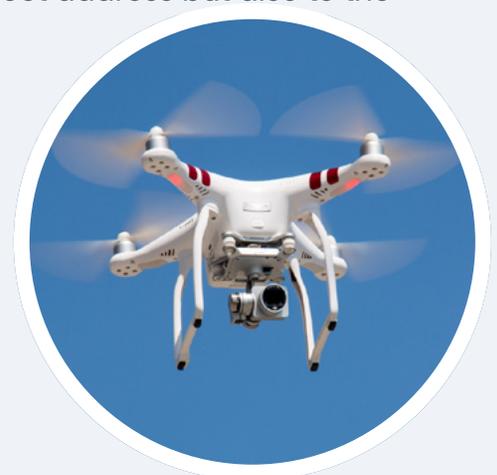
During the pandemic snacking and snack food consumption ramped up. Having enough snack foods available and on-hand at home was important to 37% of consumers.

According to market research firm, The NPD Group, Americans have been increasingly opting for fruits, nuts, and ready-to-eat snacks throughout the day - providing that sweet and salty flavor profile consumers want. The market research firm found that U.S. consumers added 25 between-meal snacking occasions per capita over the past five years, from 505 in 2015 to 530 in 2020. In 2020 the consumption of snack foods at meals grew to 26%. Infused dried fruits deliver exceptional flavor, color, and texture to **trial mix and snacks!**

## Is that a drone outside your window!?

How do you feel about your groceries being delivered... via drone? U.S. grocery store chain Kroger has partnered with Drone Express to pilot grocery drone deliveries. Kroger states that drone delivery allows them to be flexible, meet customer demand (eligible orders can deliver within as little as 15 minutes!), and be cost-effective and efficient. Grocery delivery is now available not only to a street address but also to the location of any customer's smartphone.

Our **infused dried fruit ingredients** and **Soft-N-Frozen™ fruit ingredients** are found in every grocery store in the U.S. Who knows, maybe you will be ordering some blueberry oatmeal for your morning breakfast and a drone will deliver it!



# Sneak Peek: Montmorency Tart Cherries

Exceptional ingredients start with exceptional fresh fruit from our quality-obsessed growers.



As May rolls around, we all up here in northern Michigan start thinking about the year's tart cherry crop. Cherry orchards are dormant from October to March, setting next spring's buds. Cherry blooms begin to appear in May and each bloom turns into a single tart cherry. Harvest is fast and furious, lasting only a few short weeks in late July to early August. Two-

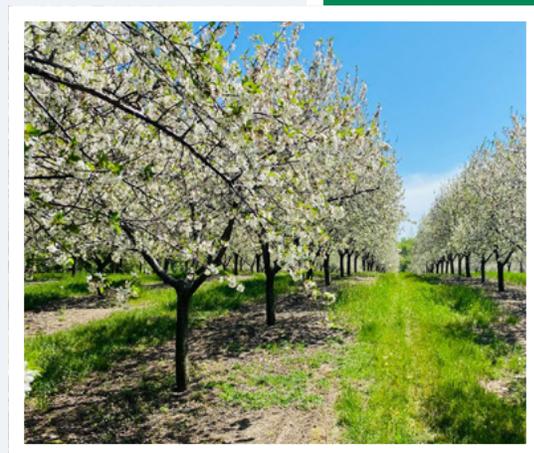
piece mechanical harvesters surround

the trunk of each tree, shake it, and catch the cherries as they drop. It only takes 10 seconds to harvest each tree! Click [HERE](#) to watch Graceland Fruit cherries being harvested.

It's always challenging to determine what the year's crop will look like until we get closer to harvest. It generally doesn't bode well when we see an early spring like we have this year. Our growers have reported that full bloom has hit northern Michigan and that orchards in southern Michigan and west central Michigan have had a huge bud set with crops looking promising in those regions.

The **Cherry Industry Administrative Board (CIAB)** does a great job providing the industry with resources, news, historical data, and updates. Over the past ten years, the CIAB has reported that the average U.S. tart cherry crop has come in at 247 million pounds.

Growers have a tough job and have to juggle many things out of their control, weather and imports being the two largest. Our Supply Chain team does a great job staying in weekly touch with our grower network, working to procure the necessary raw fruit to meet our customer's demand while keeping pricing stable and competitive. Our fingers are crossed for a fruitful tart cherry crop!



## Did you know?

Michigan food and agriculture exports boomed in 2020 – Total exports grew by \$340 million or 18.7%\*

Canada and Mexico remained Michigan's top export markets, largely due to the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) that was recently renewed. Exports to South Korea and China saw renewed growth, moving to the third and fifth positions, respectively.

Michigan's top exports include:

- Processed food products (\$365 million)
- Soybean, sugar beet, wheat byproducts (\$253 million)
- Cereals, baked goods, pasta (\$208 million)
- Soybean and soybean meal (\$193 million)
- Dairy products (\$180 million)

\*MDARD

## Are you following Graceland Fruit on social media?

Click on the icons below to jump to our page! Like, Follow, Tweet, Share, and stay up to date on all of our happenings!



## Industry News: Consumer Trust

In the United States, 23% of consumers said they have stopped using a brand that lost their trust and will never use them again, while another 28% said they have switched to a competitor.

Trust is now more than ever an imperative for brands and businesses. Value, delivered through functional features and experiential elements remains a must for a strong reputation.

- **Functional Qualities** – “Makes high-quality products that are a good value for the price.”
- **Experiential Qualities** – “Makes it easy for me to get what I need.”
- **Corporate Social Responsibility** – “Makes environmental and social issues, security factors, and data breaches a top priority.”

**47%** of global consumers say they tend to trust companies by default, meaning they have to do something bad to lose their trust.

**50%** of global consumers trust leaders of companies based in their country to do the right thing.

**75%** of global consumers trust restaurants, food & beverage companies, and home care or household goods companies to act in the best interest of consumers.

**21%** trust brands more because of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**40%** of global adults have stopped using a brand because of quality issues or poor customer service.

**33%** of global consumers would switch to a competitor’s products or service if a company they trusted did something to break their trust.

*\*Morning Consult Data Intelligence & Custom Market Research*



We deliver *delight.*

**Graceland Fruit, Inc.** is a leading producer and global distributor of premium quality dried fruit ingredients for the food industry. Our exceptional product and service performance make it easy for innovative food manufacturers and providers to create delicious, on-trend products to surprise and delight their consumers.

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