



It's Cranberry Season!

As September rolls around, all of us here at Graceland Fruit get excited about **cranberry harvest**. It's a must-see and one of the most unique fruit harvests there is. Strapping on some waders and jumping into a bog of floating red berries is an experience! If you have never seen cranberries being harvested, you can watch firsthand [here](#) – and no, cranberries do not grow in water!

Cranberries are typically harvested in September-October. At harvest time, the bogs are flooded to make the berries easier to harvest and collect. Specialized mechanical water reels are guided through the bogs to gently dislodge berries from the vine, allowing them to float to the surface. The floating fruit is corralled with booms and transferred with pumps or conveyors from the bogs into waiting trucks that transport the harvest to receiving stations for cleaning, sorting, and freezing.

Our Grower Relations Agent acts as our “boots on the ground,” meeting with our cranberry growers daily and providing updates on crop and harvest. At this time, we are getting reports of an “optimistically average crop.” **The U.S. Cranberry Marketing Committee (CMC)** forecast in August that Wisconsin growers will produce 4.92 million barrels (1 barrel = 100 pounds) this year. The CMC's nationwide harvest projection is 7.9 million barrels, up slightly from 2020.

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Cranberry Facts

- Cranberries are one of only three fruits native to North America.
- Wisconsin is #1 in the United States for cranberry production.
- Wisconsin produces more than half of all cranberries in the world.
- Only 5% of harvested cranberries are sold fresh, and the majority are made into sauce, juice, dried fruit, and other foods.
- Cranberries were originally shipped in wooden barrels weighing 100 pounds each. They are no longer shipped this way, but the 100-pound “barrel” unit of weight is still used today.
- Cranberries are incredibly healthful; they are fiber-rich, low calorie, and very high in antioxidants. Learn more about the nutrition and health of cranberries [here](#).
- Cranberries were originally called “crane berry” because the summer blossoms resemble the head of a sandhill crane.
- One gallon of cranberry juice takes about 4,400 cranberries!
- Cranberries are America’s original superfruit. Native Americans used cranberries as a staple as early as 1550.

**Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association*

Trendy Botanicals

Botanicals have a reputation for having health benefits that appeal to consumers. Several botanicals have a “superfood status,” including honey, acknowledged for its beauty benefits, immune support, and digestive aid.

According to the taste and nutrition company **Kerry**, consumers associate botanical flavors with being energetic, interesting, trustworthy, and fun. Food manufacturers can tap into this trend by leveraging consumer interest in mental and emotional wellness and the positive associations with botanical ingredients. Botanicals connect with consumers positively, allowing consumers to associate these flavors with being exciting but familiar, interesting but trustworthy, and fun but healthy.

A survey of more than 6,500 consumers across 12 countries revealed **botanicals appeal to 97% of consumers for their familiar flavors and perceived health benefits**, including digestion, cognition, and heart health. According to Kerry, beyond emotional and health benefits, consumers associate botanical flavors with clean labels and sustainability.

- **53%** of consumers reported looking for products to improve their health
- **82%** of consumers believe botanicals to be “superior quality”
- **89%** of consumers believe all-natural is an important attribute to ingredients and flavors

Food manufacturers can launch new products containing botanical extracts with their own perceived health benefits by using this new interest in botanical flavors. Have a trendy botanical concept in mind?

Let’s innovate!





“Tree of 40 Fruit”

Sam VanAken, a professor at Syracuse University, grew 40 different fruits on a single tree! Take a close look at the photo above, **The Tree of 40 Fruit** is a single tree that grows forty different types of stone fruit, including peaches, plums, apricots, nectarines, cherries, and almonds.

To create a tree that grows different fruits, VanAken took to the multi-tree chip grafting method. VanAken roams around New York in February every year, picking 12-18 inch parts from different stone fruit trees. He prefers this specific variety because of their unique capabilities. When spring comes, the buds begin to heal and become new after the pieces are intertwined together. This results in new grafting in the tree, and it turns every branch into different kinds of fruits. After the process is complete, the color-coding procedure takes place on white paper that indicates which fruit will grow on which branch.

The professor states that it is an artwork when you see the tree unexpectedly blossom in different colors or see how different types of fruit hang from the branches.

Did you know?

Bill Gates is America's largest farmer. Gates owns over 269,000 acres across 18 American states. Soybeans, corn, cotton, and rice are the main crops grown on the land.

Inflation – We all feel it

In August, inflation was still more than double the federal reserve's 2% long-term target, but its growth rate slowed for the first time in eight months.

However, it is likely this won't impact grocery prices anytime soon. Price increases negotiated between retailers and CPG manufacturers to offset higher input costs (triggered by labor and material shortages) are just now starting to pass through to consumers; this will likely continue into 2022.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed on September 14th that the consumer-price index in August rose 0.3% over the prior month. According to a recently released report from the USDA, the price of food consumed at home is expected to increase between 2.5-3.5% in 2021 over 2020. This trend will likely continue in 2022, with at-home prices projected to increase an additional 1.5-2.5%.

Because of this, CPG companies are getting creative and exploring various cost management options – bulk buying, reformulating to avoid expensive ingredients, price pack architecture, etc.



Want to know more about Benzie County?

- Benzie County is the smallest county in the state of Michigan (345 square miles).
- There is only 1 stoplight in the entire county!
- There are 50+ named lakes in Benzie County, which range from itty bitty to 15 square miles.
- Farming is common in Benzie County but there are also several unusual farms – emus, bees, alpacas.
- Benzie County is home to over 30 hiking trails, 25 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, and of course, Graceland Fruit!

Los Angeles Port Logjam

The average wait time for a container ship to enter the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach (the biggest U.S. gateway for trade with Asia) is now more than eight days. The number of container ships waiting to enter the ports is at a record high, adding delays and costs during peak season for companies to rebuild inventories.

According to [L.A. port data](#), 65 vessels were anchored or idling further offshore, waiting to offload at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, as of late Friday. The average wait rose to 8.7 days compared with 6.2 in mid-August. L.A. officials have exhausted their designated anchorage space for overflow traffic. There are a record 17 ships in so-called drift zones, areas used in times of extreme volume where they wait for room in shallower water to drop anchor safely.

What's New at Graceland

Woohoo! We have implemented our new sensor-based food sorting machine (laser sorter) into the pack line and have customized it to meet our customers' needs. During the laser sorter install, we also worked to reconfigure the layout of our pack line to further optimize space and improve efficiencies – phew, we have had a busy month! Our new laser sorter is top-notch and provides information on material, shape, size, geometry, color, defect and damage characteristics, and the location of objects within our packing operations. It then utilizes this data to improve product quality, increase operational effectiveness, and decrease waste, all while ensuring high-speed processing.

We are happy to report that with the new laser sorter installed, we see excellent results across the board in all product categories and a 50-70+% increase in inspection findings.



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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