



VICTORIAN CHERRY ASSOCIATION

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MEDIA Release

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Get Set for a Very Cherry Summer

Despite the drought and the damage caused by the 2006 frosts, Victorian cherry growers are reporting good crops this year. Cherry lovers can get set for a delicious season with plenty of local fruit from mid November through to mid-January.

Victorian growers have increased tree plantings especially in those parts of the state where cherries will mature earlier. With large numbers of trees planted in warmer areas such as Cobram and along the Murray River and in elevated areas such as Strathbogie Ranges, Gisborne, Beechworth and Mansfield, cherry lovers will soon enjoy locally grown fruit for an extended season, from early November through to the end of January each year.

As well as extending the season, growers have refined the varieties they bring to market to our very favourite ones. These include Merchant, Ron, Ulster, Bing, Lapin and Sweetheart, all considered the best because of their rich and sweet flavours and gorgeous deep colours.

There are many reasons cherries are good for you. In particular, they contain a unique combination of vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds which act together to deliver health benefits not available from supplements. Cherries are full of natural goodness.

Sweet cherries contain 16 antioxidants to help clear the body of damaging free radicals. Antioxidants are most effectively acquired through diet and help to prevent degeneration and disease including cardiovascular disease, arthritis, cancer, inflammatory conditions and neurological diseases.

While prices will vary throughout the season, you can expect to pay between \$10.00 and \$20.00 per kilo in store (larger fruit may attract higher prices).

Tips for storing and pitting cherries:

Cherries are best stored unwashed and packed loosely (to minimise bruising) in a plastic bag in the refrigerator, or place them in a shallow container in a single layer and cover with plastic wrap. Wash just prior to eating. Fresh cherries are best eaten within three days of purchase.

To pit cherries for cooking, halve them with a paring knife and pry out the pit with the tip of the knife, or use a cherry or olive pitter that can be found in any good home-ware store.

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