

Fresh Northwest-grown sweet cherries, which are packed with nutrients that support better health, are now available in produce sections from coast to coast.

"It's been a long spring for our growers, but harvest has finally arrived" said B.J. Thurlby, President of the [Northwest Cherry Growers](#). Although a snowfall during cherry bloom this year significantly reduced and delayed the crop, thankfully the remaining fruit is all the better for the reduced competition on the trees.

"Fortunately, the long, cool spring gave our cherries ample time to plump up, resulting in large, dark, extra-sweet cherries that have that great light crunch as you bite into them," he added.

It was reported in June that this could be one of the smallest Northwest cherry crops ever due to the cold spring weather.

The sweet cherries are loaded with anthocyanins, a polyphenolic compound that gives the fruit their deep, dark color from skin to pit and has also been shown to reduce inflammation, which may be a contributing factor to diseases such as arthritis, cancer and diabetes.

In addition, the summertime superfruit not only keeps pain at bay, but it also reduces stress and improves sleep, making it a healthy grab-and-go snack for consumers of all ages.

"With grocery costs on the rise, foods that satisfy your tastebuds and fuel your health are key to cost-conscious purchasing," pointed out Kelly Pritchett, Ph.D., RDN, CSSD, assistant professor at Central Washington University.

Moreover, Northwest sweet cherries, which are harvested by more than 2,000 growers across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Montana, are also a low-glycemic snack for those watching their blood sugars at home or on the go. Studies indicate that sweet cherries release glucose slowly and evenly, allowing blood sugar levels to stay steady longer.

To conclude, cherries are a versatile fresh fruit and their dietary advantages can also be tapped year-round when they are frozen, dried, canned or even pickled.

Northwest cherries will be available in stores from mid June through early September.