

## COMMODITY

## TREE FRUITS

### Description

British Columbia's tree fruit industry is centered in the Okanagan Valley with some production occurring in the Kootenays, Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. Apples are the dominant species grown. Apricots, cherries, peaches, pears, and plums are also produced.

BC's hot dry summers and cool winters make it well suited to fruit production. Apple trees must be cross-pollinated if they are to bear fruit. When trees blossom in the spring, growers place beehives in their orchards to ensure that pollination occurs. Fruit trees take two to three years to begin bearing fruit, four to eight years to reach full production and will live 20 years or more. Pruning is required to maximize fruit production. Most fruit is shipped to a packinghouse, where it is cooled, graded, packed and stored until it is shipped to market.

### Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the Farm Practice section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to tree fruit production include:

#### Aircraft Activities

Cherry growers may use helicopters to blow water residue off cherries to reduce fruit splitting once the fruit starts to ripen.

See Farm Practice: [Mobile Equipment](#)

#### Frost Control

Orchardists may use wind machines to protect fruit from frost in frost prone pockets and low areas where temperature inversions occur. Wind machines generally operate during the night or early morning hours. Smudge pots, heaters and irrigation systems may also be used for frost protection.

See Farm Practice: [Stationary Equipment](#)

#### Irrigation

Tree fruits require irrigation in most regions of the province to grow a viable crop. Irrigation systems usually operate 24 hours per day. Fertilizers may be applied through the irrigation system.

See Farm Practice: [Irrigation](#)

#### Pesticide Application

Pesticides may be applied at any time during the spring, summer or fall. Pesticides may be applied any time of day, but spraying is generally done early in the morning or late in the evening when winds are light. Sometimes the only way orchardists can get their crops treated in the time frame required for proper pest control is to spray at night.

See Farm Practice: [Storage of Hazardous Material](#)  
[Pesticides](#)  
[Weed Control](#)

## Pruning

Prunings are usually mulched but they may be piled and burned, provided the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation is observed. Mechanical pruning equipment may be used.

See Farm Practice: [Burning](#)  
[Crop Residue Management](#)  
[Mobile Equipment](#)

## Transportation

Orchardists may have vehicles making deliveries and hauling products day and night. Producers must supply adequate areas on the farm property to handle the volume, movement, and parking of trucks and other traffic related to the activities and production of the farm. Operations which sell direct to the public must provide adequate parking for customers to park off the road.

See Farm Practice: [Direct Farm Marketing and Agriculture Tourism](#)  
[Product Processing](#)  
[Transportation](#)

## Wildlife Control

The use of bird scaring devices in tree fruits is a common practice. Propane cannons are noisy and growers may frequently receive complaints about their use from neighbours. Bird distress calls, orchard pistols or other electronic noise makers are also subject to complaints. Growers are encouraged to use an integrated management approach to control bird damage to crops.

See Farm Practice: [Wildlife Damage Control – South Coastal BC](#)  
[Wildlife Damage Control – Interior BC](#)

## Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operation. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Health Act*, *Pesticide Control Act*, *Waste Management Act* and the regulations under those acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the farm practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere that are of special interest to tree fruit producers include the following:

### Provincial

[Wildlife Act](#) – regulates hunting, angling and management of fish and wildlife resources

### Local Government

Applicable *Noise Bylaws*.

## **Publications**

Publications that provide information on tree fruit production include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

*British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide*

*Deer Exclusion Fencing for Orchards-Woven Wire*

*Fertigation Guidelines in High Density Apples and Apple Nurseries in the Okanagan Similkameen*

*Field Guide to Harmful and Beneficial Insects and Mites of Tree Fruits*

*Protecting Orchards From Deer*

*Protecting Orchards from Spring Frosts*

*Tree Fruit Production Guide for Commercial Growers*