

# May Farmer of the Month

Each month you learn about local farmers who grow the Harvest of the Month.

This month we'd like to introduce you to Bob White, from Orland who grows organic cherries.



## MEET THE FARMER:

WHO: Bob & Marcia White

WHERE: Orland, Glenn County, CA

WHAT: Cherries (Varieties: Brooks, Tulare, Royal Rainer)

## THE FARMER'S STORY

When you ask Bob White what he loves about farming, he shares, "My favorite thing is being on my tractor at night, under the moonlight, spraying my orchards because it is so peaceful and quiet." Bob is a certified organic grower, and to keep his trees healthy, he uses the spray technique to "spoon feed" his trees the minerals and nutrients they need to stay healthy. Bob says they are the same minerals that we need, such as calcium, magnesium, zinc, and boron.

Bob paints a beautiful picture when he describes the cycle of keeping plants healthy organically. By adding nutrients to the soil, it helps the tree grow strong, which then grows healthy, vitamin rich fruit, and then we benefit from eating the nutritious cherries. "It's better to get your vitamins through food," says Bob, "it's the way it's suppose to be." Bob says he farms organically because "it's the right thing to do."

His delicious cherries are sold locally and are also exported to other countries such as Japan, Kuwait, and Thailand. Bob's fresh cherries are picked one day, then packed in Linden and travel by airplane to be in on the shelves of supermarkets on the other side of the world within 3 days!

Bob and Marcia White both grew up in Chico, CA and have lived in Orland now for over 20 years. They started farming about 13 years ago and as Bob says, "farming is a lifestyle and for me, there is no other way to go."



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*Cherries ripening on Bob's trees in late April*

## THE FARMER'S STORY CONTINUED...

Bob, like other growers, is dependent on the weather to determine if it's going to be a good harvest. This year, because we had warm weather in February, followed by cold weather in March, he only expects to have half of his usual harvest. The weather affected cherry crops across the state and cherries are hard to find this year. A small harvest doesn't stop Bob from feeding his trees and keeping them healthy. By feeding the trees the nutrients they need, he is building up his trees for next year's harvest. If you were to visit Bob's farm now, you could smell the scent of cherries in the air, and see thousands of ladybugs in his orchard, protecting the trees from harmful insects.



Bob has also created a way to help his cherry trees grow lower to the ground so they are easier to hand pick. He plants the trees at a 30 degree angle so they grow closer to the ground, and he ties the limbs to encourage the tree limbs to grow horizontally and to only grow about 5 feet tall. *(see picture above)*

Bob and his wife eat their cherries fresh, in (uncooked) cherry pies, and preserve them by freezing cherries or making cherry jam so they can enjoy their harvest throughout the year. You can ask Bob & Marcia for their fresh cherry pie recipe when you see them at the Saturday morning farmers' market in Chico this May. If you want to taste more of their tasty cherries, you need to get to the market early because they sell out quickly!

Visit the Chico Certified Farmers' Market  
Saturdays year round, from 7:30am—1pm, on 2nd Street & Wall  
in Downtown Chico, rain or shine.

### Go Farther...

1. Share one thing you learned from hearing Bob's story?
2. Why are minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and zinc good for your body?
3. Do you know anyone in your family that grows cherries?
4. What is your family's favorite way to eat cherries?
5. How many miles do Bob's cherries travel from Orland, CA to Tokyo, Japan?

