

**成多の危機を
どう乗り
越えたのか？**

危機をどう
乗り越えたのか？
長寿企業
逆境に勝つ強さの秘訣

好評発売中!

「家業」こそ理想的な

California Prunes – Nature’s Gift from California

- Blessings of the Sun and the Earth

California Prunes, a gem of taste produced by sincere and earnest growers in the rich and plentiful nature of California. California Prunes are blessed with both fresh flavor of fruits and strong sweetness and richness of dried fruits. In Japan California Prunes draw consumers’ attention for not only for the superb taste but also the excellent nutritional value. Let’s hear from California Prune growers who deliver the nature’s gift from California to the world while protecting the local environment through their sustainable cultivation.

<California Prune Growers>



Joe Turkovich

Joe Turkovich has been growing prunes for 40 years at the farm which his father started. Joe has a B.S. in Agricultural Business Management from California Polytechnic State University. He is Ex- Chairman of the California Prune Board and as a member of the Board’s Crop Sustainability and Research Committee. At his farm, he uses the method of agriculture based upon the understanding of the ecosystem, which can be seen as he plants new orchards onto

soil naturally rejuvenated with field crops like safflower that provide healthy soil microbiology for the new trees.



Sandra Mitchell

She farms with her husband Neill and son Joseph. The farm consists of 500 acres of prunes, walnuts and peaches, a prune dehydrator and walnut huller. She is a member of the California Prune Board, Prune Bargaining Association, and the California Farm Bureau. Sandra currently sits on the California Prune Board Nutrition Research and spends her time educating

people about how eating a few delicious prunes a day can have many health benefits. In Sandra’s spare time, she enjoys being with her family and 5 grandchildren and playing golf.



Michael Vasey

After working in the corporate world for 20 years, Michael and his wife, Hillary decided to return to her hometown to run the family farm. Vasey has been growing prunes for 16 years, but the family has been farming prunes for over 85 years. They also maintain a 100-acre

riparian forest between the farm and the Sacramento River, preserving native species of plants and wildlife in their natural habitat. When not growing prunes, Mike enjoys riding motorcycles and playing tennis.



Mike Vereschagin

Mike is a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership program, a member of the California Prune Board and Prune Marketing Committee. He is dedicated to innovation on his operation, and he has hosted field days to help educate his fellow prune growers and continues to work to improve efficiency on his farm. Mike is a San Francisco Giants

and 49ers fan and fishing is also a hobby of his.

Harvesting and Drying in the Natural State to Bring Out the Sweetness Fully

The history of California Prunes begins when a Frenchman by the name of Louis Pellier traveled to California with the dream of hitting it rich in the California gold rush about 150 years ago. Instead, he planted seedlings brought along from his native France and restarted his career as a gardener. One of those seedling types was the legendary Agen plum native to Southern France. He grafted the seedlings to adapt them to the California climate. With the help of irrigation equipment and other agricultural technology, the resulting prunes achieving rapid and sturdy growth expanded these beginnings into a full-blown industry.

California Prunes, reaping the blessings of the rich local sunshine, have been known for 1) being cultivated to the ideal size, 2) being packed with plentiful natural sweetness and 3) delivering pleasurable texture when consumed; and

today, California Prunes account for around 40% of the total global production volume.

In mid-August, the trees in prune fields bear deep-purple colored prunes in the bright sunlight peculiar to California. This tells us the arrival of the harvest season. Farmers await the time to harvest, looking at the firmness of the fruit or degrees of fruit sugar. When the fruit's sugar content reaches about 25%, it is time to harvest. The prunes are so sweet, which is because they are fully ripen on the tree. Following the harvest, the prunes are washed in water and then carried to driers. There, drying continues for 18-24 hours by blowing hot winds of 80°C through the area. Before shipment as finished products, the moisture values are adjusted and other work are performed to meet specific orders, the devoted approach taken to satisfy the stringent quality standards. However, nothing is added and no excessive steps are taken.

According to Mike Vasey, who runs the Lindauer River Ranch located along the Sacramento River, "My favorite time of the year is harvest time when prunes are ripe and we enjoy eating them right out of the tree and just coming out of the dryer. I enjoy knowing that we are growing a quality crop from planting to harvesting and drying in a responsible way."

Using Sustainable Cultivation to Protect the Earth, Delivering Safety, Health and Peace of Mind

The sweetness, high nutritive value and other strengths of California Prunes owe in great part to the local climate and natural features. The keys to these advantages include the long hours of sunlight around the year, as well as winter temperatures that do not grow excessively chilly.

The pioneers in this field built up a Prune Kingdom by channeling water into the fields to render the earth even more fertile. That spirit has been relentlessly carried on over the generations, and is now practiced by modern-day growers as well.

Today's growers are focusing keen attention on the goal of sustainable cultivation. On the farm of Joe Turkovich, Ex-Chairman of the California Prune Board, no chemicals are used to control gophers, an animal known to devour the roots of prune trees. Instead, the farm keeps and mobilizes owls to prey upon those pests.

The previously mentioned Michael Vasey has installed underground drip irrigation at his ranch, helping to reduce the amount of water used. With this system, five solar arrays supply renewable energy to the dryer and all the irrigation pumps.

At the ranch operated by Mike Vereschagin, who studied Agronomy and majored in Agricultural Business at the Chico State University, micro sprinkler irrigation has been in use since 1985. Under that approach specific amounts of water are delivered while providing efficient fertilization to each tree. Compared to before the transition to this method, the ranch fertilization and water application rate has been reduced by between 33 and 50%. In 2010, Mike's ranch was named the Glenn County "Conservationist of the Year." The operation earned yet another stellar honor in 2016, when it was awarded the University of California Davis Campus "Conservation Agriculture Systems Farmer Innovator Award." The latter distinction was in recognition of the use of cover crops to supply a food source to honeybees, together with organic fumigation for pest control in the orchards.

According to Joe Turkovich: "One reason for the fine quality of California agricultural produce lies in public disclosure of the results of studies conducted by universities, research institutions and other organizations. Growers put those findings to active use in their own cultivation efforts, with the rewards effectively passed on to consumers."

Sandra Mitchell, who operates a ranch in the Northern California Valley of Sutter County, promotes enlightenment activities to expand knowledge of the nutriment contained in prunes, how those components contribute to good health and other valuable information. Long years of research have fostered understanding of the rich amounts of antioxidants, dietary fiber, vitamins, minerals and other components contained in prunes. More recently, prunes are also generating interest for their actions on the intestines, bones and other parts of the body.

In this way, to truly harness the vast powers of California nature in support of human health, the growers at prune orchards carry on the quest to champion the evolution of increasingly more thorough natural growing methods.

Prunes containing two types of dietary fiber are expected to regulate the intestinal environment

By Akiko Kobayashi, Ph.D., M.D.

With the country's population rapidly aging, the Japanese people are paying more and more attention to measures that help them maintain their health. To that end, it is important to eat well-balanced meals and exercise regularly. I would recommend that people start taking care of their intestinal conditions even when they are young. In recent years, research has been advanced into defining the linkage between the intestine and the brain. Effectively regulating the intestinal environment improves the ability to deal with diseases and also has a positive impact on the immune system. Moderate exercises enhance intestinal functions.

What I would like to mention specially here is "prunes," as prunes contain both soluble and insoluble dietary fiber in a well-balanced way. Soluble dietary fiber acts as the food for friendly (probiotic) bacteria, and insoluble dietary fiber helps to increase stool bulk, stimulate the intestinal wall and support smooth bowel movements. Moreover, prunes contain calcium. Prunes are an ideal food for people of mature age as eating prunes contribute to gut health as well as gut health.

I, myself, eat prunes in my daily life. Not only snacking on them, I stew them in tea, cut them into pieces and use them as part of fruit punch. I also use prunes as an ingredient for cooking. Utilizing prunes well will enable you to regulate the intestinal environment every day without hassle.