

LIFE IN THE VALLEY

The Ultimate U-Pick Guide



Picking berries can be a fun and memorable family experience. FILE / STATESMAN JOURNAL

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The Willamette Valley: a beacon of wine, a haven of hazelnuts, and a veritable paradise of fruit. It would be a crime to let summer slip by without submitting oneself to the sun-warmed of tree-ripened plums or hand-picked berries. By far the most immediate and economical way of doing so is by visiting a farm and picking some fruit to take home and stash in the freezer for the gray days to come.

Fortunately, there are an abundance of area farms ready to welcome visitors for a day in the field. Though we couldn't possibly capture a list of all of them, what follows is an attempt at a thorough list to represent an abundance of u-pick farmstand and pick-your-own destinations.

Why go through the trouble of picking your own? Because it's a memorable experience and a great activity for families. Because it's virtually impossible to get one's hands on food that could be any fresher. And because the pick-your-own price point is often a vastly better deal than you'll find anywhere else.

Some pick-your-own places are full-day events with attractions that can include chances to meet farm animals like chickens or goats; gift shops, restaurants and general stores; or garden centers. Others are simpler; picture a farmstand with some fruit or vegetables for sale in addition to u-pick crops. Still, others are even more straightforward: a table and an open shed, or at least a folding table, with little more than a scale and a cash register.

Regardless of the scale of the farm you visit, it's always best to call ahead (or check a farm's Facebook page) to confirm what's available for picking that day. Remember to be courteous with the hours you call—at many of the numbers listed below you'll be speaking directly to a farmer on his or her cell phone—so keep calls between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m..

Before you leave, make a realistic assessment of how much fridge or freezer space you've got to fill at home. Berries are particularly perishable and peaches, nectarines, plums, apples, and pears amass quicker than you might expect. Especially if you're picking with family members, you can wind up with a bushel (literally) of fruit in hand before you've spent 20 minutes in the field.

Pack your car (see below for a list of what to bring), fill a water bottle, call a farm to confirm, and get out there. Happy picking!

What to bring:

■ **Containers** - While many farms will have buckets to pick into and you remember to bring your own. Kitchen containers (like Tupperware) are great for berries because they're lightweight, easy to carry and, once you get home, they can go straight into the fridge. Bring larger cardboard boxes for tree fruit—shallow is better than deep to prevent bruising. Remember to have them weighed before you start picking and bring more than you think you need—you'll often use them.

■ **Sunscreen & Hat** - There may be some shade if you're picking tree fruit, but picking berries often means standing in full sun. Prepare accordingly and your picking experience will be much more comfortable.

■ **Water & Snacks** - Few farmers would begrudge someone snacking on a few berries, but it's rude to treat a u-pick excursion as though it's a snack bar. Bring snacks, especially for kiddos, and plenty of water for everyone.

■ **Bug Spray** - In case the flies or mosquitoes are biting.

■ **Long Sleeves** - Having sleeves on is particularly helpful if you're picking strawberries, the leaves of which are covered in micro hairs that irritate some peoples' skin. They also protect against scratches from thorns on blackberries, raspberries, tayberries, etc.

■ **Sturdy Shoes** - Farms can be muddy places. Skip the sandals and opt for closed-toed shoes.

■ **Cooler & Ice** - If you're picking berries and you've got a bit of a drive home, having a cooler at the ready will help keep your berries from starting to tun to jam on the way.

■ **Cash** - Some farms take credit/debit cards, but many, especially smaller ones, do not. Bring cash and/or a checkbook.

What not to bring:

■ **Pets** - It's tempting to bring your pup along with you, but many farms have livestock who might be perturbed by canine visitors. Always call ahead to check with a specific farm on what their policy is on dog visitors.

Childers Raspberry Farm

Lonnie and Shirley Childers and their son and daughter-in-law Dean and Keri run this family farm that specializes exclusively in raspberries.

Where: 36242 Tapper Lane SE Albany

Phone: (541) 926-7478
2020 Picks: raspberries (Meeker and Cascade)

Information: Childers Raspberry Farm (Facebook)

Brooks

Where: 4925 Rockdale St NE Brooks

Phone: (503) 393-1077
2020 Picks: tomatoes, apples (14+ kinds), peppers, pumpkins

Information:
■ www.beilkefamilyfarm.com
■ Beilke Family Farm (Facebook)

Canby

Morning Shade Farm

Established 25 years ago, Morning Shade Farm offers a variety of pick-your-own fruits. They're currently implementing safety protocols to reopen for 2020, but will close u-pick if area coronavirus cases worsen.

Where: 8345 S Barnards Road Canby
Phone: (503) 651-2622

2020 Picks: blueberries, currants, marionberries, boysenberries, plums, blackberries, hardy kiwis, apples, pears
Information:
■ Morning Shade Farm (Facebook)
■ www.canby.com/morningshade

South Barlow Berries

Where: 29190 South Barlow Road Canby
Phone: (503) 266-3193

2020 Picks: strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, marionberries, boysenberries
Information:
■ southbarlowberries.com
■ South Barlow Berries (Facebook)

Dallas

Perryhill Farm

Where: 5775 Perrydale Rd, Dallas
Phone: 503-623-4539

2020 Picks: raspberries, blueberries, peaches, cherries, apples
Information:
■ www.perryhillfarm.net
■ Perryhill Farm (Facebook)

Sliverfarm Fruit

Family-run farm with an acre of strawberries devoted entirely to strawberries.

Where: 6000 Perrydale Road Dallas
Phone: 503-623-2713

2020 Picks: all star, hood and caven-dish strawberries
Information: Sliverfarm Fruit (Facebook)

Dayton

Hildebrandt Cherry Orchards

Hildebrandt Cherry Orchards offers more than 12 varieties of cherries.

Where: 18905 SE Wallace Road Dayton
Phone: 503-871-9411

2020 Picks: sweet cherries
Information:Hildebrandt Cherry Orchards (Facebook)

Jeff and Jen's U-Pick

Where: 18265 SE Neck Road Dayton
Phone: 503-560-9275

2020 Picks: strawberries and blueberries
Information: jeff-and-jens-u-pick.business.site

Boones Ferry Berry Farms

Where: 19602 Boones Ferry Road NE Hubbard

Phone: 503-678-5871
2020 Picks: blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, marionberries, boysenberries
Information:
■ www.boonesberry.com
■ Boones Ferry Berry Farms (Facebook)

Sublimity

Jensen Blueberries

A small u-pick blueberry field located a mile outside of Sublimity and operated by owners Annette and Mark Jensen. A family friendly field, Jensen Blueberries offer Duke, Blue Crop, Legacy and Pink Lemonade varieties.

Where: 8485 Anderson Road Sublimity

Phone: 503-769-4244
2020 Picks: blueberries
Information:Jensen's Blueberries (Facebook)