

Erovick family: Two orchards are better than one

By **HEATHER SMITH THOMAS**
For the Capital Press

COLBERT, Wash. — This U-pick orchard at Green Bluff has been a popular place for many years — with customers coming back time and again to pick their favorite fruit.

Brad Erovick bought the Cherryshack orchard in 2006. At that time it was 10 acres, growing cherries, apples, pears, peaches, apricots and plums. There was already a large customer base of folks who came every summer to pick their own fruit so it was easy to transition into the new ownership.

“We get customers from all over, including folks from Idaho and Montana because they have colder weather and can’t grow fruit like we can,” he said, adding that the orchard has been a popular summer destination for a long time.

It’s also been a family operation.

“My son and daughter grew up here, helping with everything. Wyatt is now in college at Eastern Washington University studying business, and Natalie is a senior in high school. My wife, Jackie, is a den-



Brad Erovick and his wife, Jackie.

tal hygienist at the Veterans Administration but helps here when she can,” Brad said.

“We bought Smith’s Hilltop Orchard — 4 more acres — six years ago. It isn’t adjacent, but nearby. That one has mostly cherries and peaches, and a few apples and also U-pick,” Brad said. “Darrell Smith owned it originally; he started it in the early 1970s. We left the name the same. It also has a strawberry field.”

The Green Bluff area is known for excellent fruit, with several U-pick farms dotting the countryside.

“We are zoned for this. Orchards at Green Bluff

have been providing fruit for the Northwest for more than 100 years.

“At first there were many apple orchards and Treetop had a packing house nearby. One year their roof caved in from the snow and the company didn’t stay. It didn’t work for orchards to ship apples all the way to a packing house in Wenatchee or farther,” Brad said.

Some switched crops.

“The remaining orchards transitioned to U-pick. The other farms are now growing hay instead of trees,” he said. “It’s all dryland farming; we depend on rain. We have good soil that holds moisture.”

Climate is ideal and winters aren’t too cold.

“In my 15 years here we haven’t had a hard winter, and I haven’t heard any old-timers talk about bad winters,” he said. “Some of the low areas sometimes get a little cold, but where we are, winters haven’t been hard on trees.”

Spring comes early, however, and apricots are first to bloom.

“Sometimes we lose those if there’s a late frost. The different fruits bloom at different times,” Brad said.

Between the bees in the area, wild bees and those he brings in, there are plenty for pollination.

During picking season his kids generally run the little store and enjoy meeting the customers.

“We get to know them and see people grow up. They

came in baby strollers or as toddlers with their families and then we see them graduate and get married,” Brad said.

People look forward to getting out in the country in summer, especially since the pandemic.

“It mentally helps people to get outdoors and do things like this, picking their own fruit and doing the canning they love to do,” he said.

The orchard is small enough to have a personal touch, yet has a large selection for their customers.

“It’s much better fruit than you find at a grocery store. It’s sweeter and tastes better. Peach season is big, with people wanting fresh peaches for eating and canning. Our biggest season is fall with pumpkins as well as fruit, especially apples. Weekends are a zoo.”

With his kids going to college, he is losing his help. Natalie plans to go to North Dakota State University and study agronomy.

They help during summers, however.

“We don’t hire much help; it’s mainly just family, and all hand labor. People are surprised to know that even with 1,000 trees I personally know them all,” he said.

Brad has nurtured, pruned and thinned each one, sampled the fruit and knows each tree.

“My dad used to help but he passed away a couple years ago. We have friends who help when we need it. My mom still helps and makes all the jams and syrups we sell in our commercial kitchen. We also make cider to sell.”

There is something for everyone.

ORCHARDS, VINES, NUTS, HEMP, PASTURES, FARMS & MUCH MORE

Best Natural Fertilizer On Earth

“Chicken Soup for the Soil® improves your soil by feeding the microbes and supplying all the nutrients most fertilizers neglect.”

- ✘ Improve Your Soil Health In 2022
- ✘ Increase Yields & Quality Without Spending More Money
- ✘ Stronger, Healthier Plants & Trees With More Nutrition
- ✘ Allows Plants & Trees To Reach Maximum Genetic Potential
- ✘ GMO Free, Toxin Free, No Added Chemicals



64oz Jug
34.95*
+ Free Shipping!!

TIME TO PLACE YOUR ORDER!



*Makes up to 128 gallons with 1 tablespoon per gallon.

***COMMERCIAL QUANTITIES ALSO AVAILABLE.**

888-394-4454 • www.DrJimZ.com

Hazelnut Orchard Sprayer



- Electric eye sucker sprayer
- Floor spray- strip spray
- Adjustable boom-100 gal tank



25000 SW DeJong Rd. Sheridan

Call today: 800-887-3415 dejongproducts.com

5285204-1