

Central Otago fruit

Stat attack

Including their steel supports, the iconic Cromwell fruit are hefty. The nectarine and pear weigh 2.25 tonnes each; the apricot 1.8 tonnes; and the apple almost 3 tonnes.

Hey guess what?

The winner of Cromwell's 2006 inaugural National Cherry Spitting Contest was Michael Robinson with a result of over 11m.

Local nuggets

There is an orchard near Roxburgh that still uses a shed built with timber that came from the demolished buildings of the 1925-26 New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition held in Dunedin.

Jargon hunter

The science and practice of cultivating fruit is called pomology.

\$100,000 worth of fibreglass fruit lets you know you have arrived in Cromwell. Installed in 1990, this iconic town sculpture originated from a suggestion by Rotarian Otto Muller, offered in response to a call from the Cromwell Borough Council for 'something different' to advertise the town.

The cherries, apricots, nectarines, peaches, apples, plums and pears that flourish in Central Otago's stunning climate and fertile, free-draining soils mark the progression of summer and the onset of autumn. The first European fruit trees arrived with the goldminers in the 1860s.

When goldmining declined, miners' water rights became available for orchard irrigation. The arrival of the railway in Central Otago from the late 19th century helped solve the issue of transporting surplus fruit to markets outside the district. 6,000 young trees were planted in the Alexandra-Clyde district and 13,358 cases of fruit were dispatched in the 1908-1909 season. Orchardng became a major industry in the areas around Cromwell, Alexandra and Roxburgh in the 1920s. Some Central Otago orchards have been in the same family for five generations. In 2006-2007 there were 1375 hectares planted in predominantly stonefruit.

To taste the produce, you can pick your own fruit at selected orchards during the season, or stop at any one of a number of roadside stalls to stock up. Look out for the ones that also sell ice cream made using their own fresh fruit!



Central Otago cherries are a summer highlight



Raspberry flavoured fresh fruit ice cream – delicious

